

 Shojo Beat Manga

love★com™



Story & Art by

Aya Nakahara

1



Shojo Beat

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AND WITH A
LAST NAME
LIKE KOIZUMI,
WHICH MEANS
"LITTLE
SPRING"...

HEY!!
KOI-
ZUMI!!

I'VE
ALWAYS
BEEN
TALL FOR
MY AGE...

RISA,
HEY,
WAKE
UP...

KOI-
ZUMI!!

I.E.
"BIG
SPRING."

IT'S LIKE,
"SORRY
MY NAME
ISN'T
ÔIZUMI."

...SO AT
SCHOOL
ASSEMBLIES
AND STUFF
I'D ALWAYS
BE AT THE
VERY BACK.





Story & Art by
Aya Nakahara

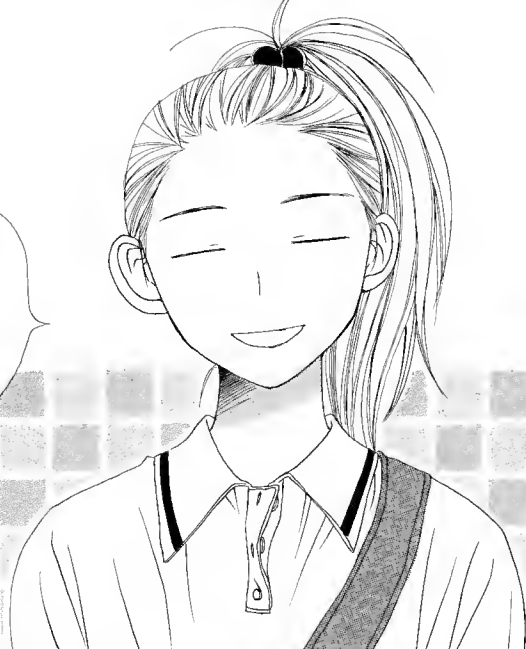
1



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SORRY
ABOUT
THAT.



I WAS
GAMING
ALL
NIGHT.

WHAT'S
THE DEAL,
YOU UP
ALL NIGHT
PARTYING
OR SOME-
THING?



SORRY.

HOW'D
YOU EVEN
DO IT?
TAKES SKILL,
SLEEPING
ON YOUR
FEET.

WHAAAT?!
BUT
SUMMER
VACATION
STARTS
TOMOR...

NOT
FOR
YOU, IT
DOESN'T.



ALL
RIGHT!

YOUR
PENALTY
IS TO KEEP
COMING TO
SCHOOL
EVERY
DAY!

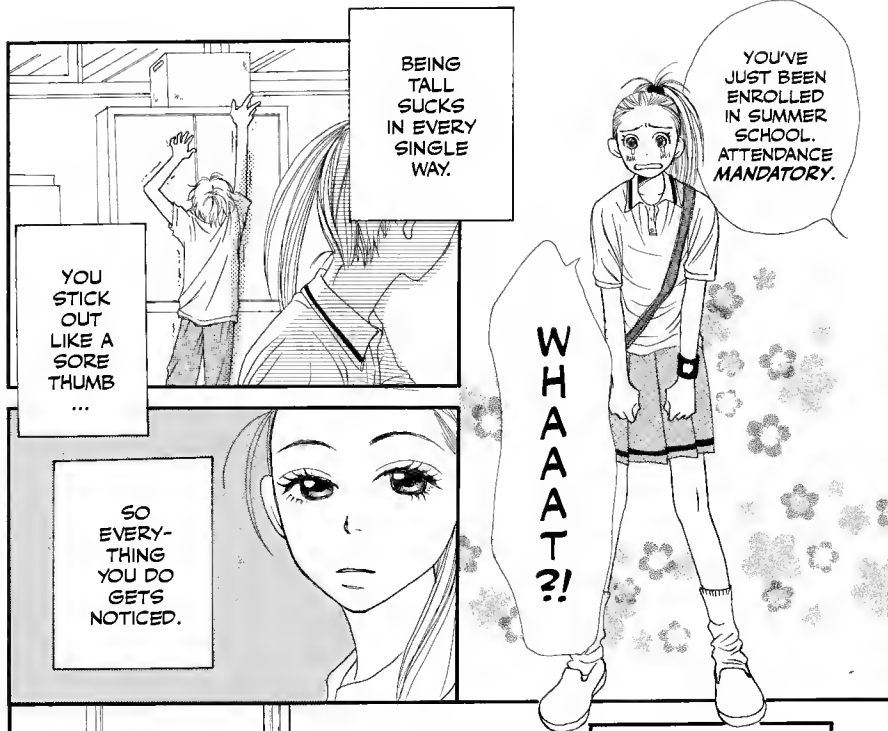
heh
heh

YOU'RE
WEL-
COME.

Say
what?

GAMING?
AT YOUR
COM-
PUTER?
VERY SEXY,
KOIZUMI.





MOVE,
JUMBO-
GAL!!
YOU'RE
BLOCKING
MY WAY!!

YUP.

THIS IS
ÔTANI.

"BIG
VALLEY,"
WHEN HE'S
REALLY A
SHRIMP.

...YOU
MAKING
FUN OF
ME?

YOU
BET
I AM!!

YOU
ASKIN'
FOR A
FIGHT?!!
HUH?!

HEY,
YOU TWO.
YOU "ALL
HANSHIN-
KYOJIN"
THERE!

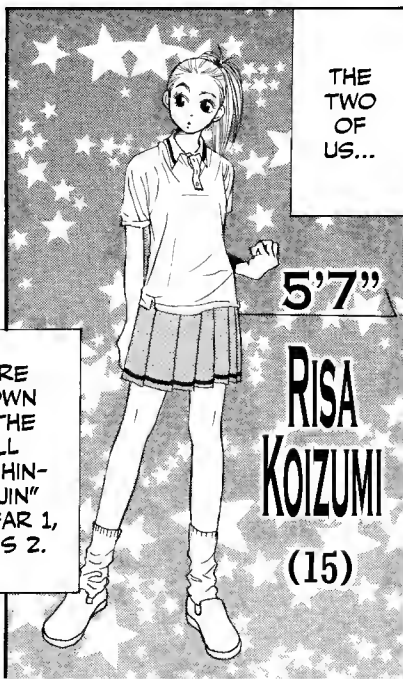
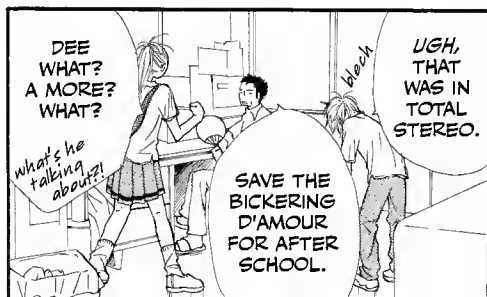
WATCH IT,
MIDGET!!

OH,
SORRY,
YOU
PREFER
"BEHE-
MOTH,"
MAYBE?

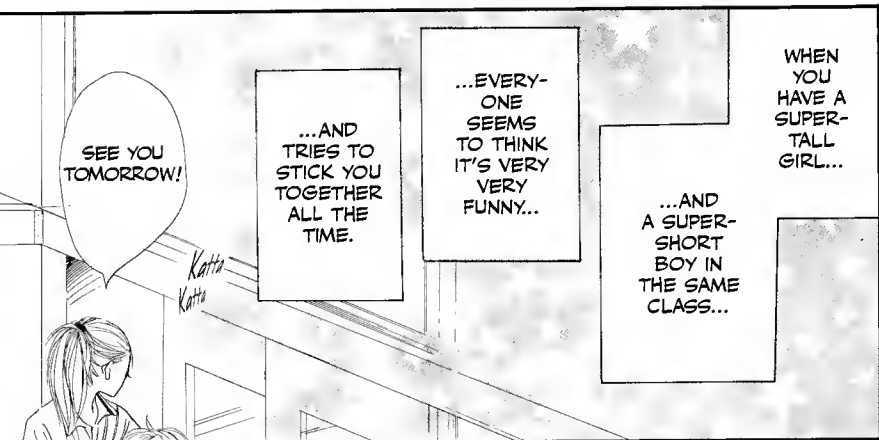
YEAH.
GREAT.
THANKS.

THIS THE
BOX YOU
WANTED?

SOMEONE
DOES YOU A
FAVOR AND
YOU CALL HER
JUMBO-GAL?!!



...ARE
KNOWN
AS THE
"ALL
HANSHIN-
KYOJIN"
OF YEAR 1,
CLASS 2.



SEE YOU
TOMORROW!

Katta
Katta

...AND
TRIES TO
STICK TO
TOGETHER
ALL THE
TIME.

...EVERY-
ONE
SEEMS
TO THINK
IT'S VERY
FUNNY...

WHEN
YOU
HAVE A
SUPER-
TALL
GIRL...

...AND
A SUPER-
SHORT
BOY IN
THE SAME
CLASS...



AND
WHO'D
WANNA GO
OUT WITH
A GIRL WHO
SNORES
STANDING UP,
ANYWAY?



SO
LOUD
WE
HEARD
YOU
ALL THE
WAY UP
FRONT.

I WASN'T
SNORING,
WAS I?!

NO
WAY!

NO,
YOU
SHOVE
OFF!

HEY,
SHOVE
OFF!



WHY
WOULD
I EVER GO
OUT WITH
A GIGANTIC
FREAK WHO
MAKES ME
LOOK EVEN
SHORTER
THAN I AM?

SUBSTI-
TUTE "TINY
RUNT" FOR
"GIGANTIC
FREAK" AND
YOU GOT MY
THOUGHTS
EXACTLY.



WE GOT
THE "ALL
HANSHIN-
KYOJIN"
MONIKER...

...FROM OUR
HOMEROOM
TEACHER,
MR. YAMADA,
WHEN
HE PICKED
US TO BE
THE CLASS
REPS.

You guys
know
"All Hanshin-
Kyojin"?

They're
this comedy
duo, a really
tall guy,
Kyojin, with
this really
short guy,
Hanshin...

No
know
them.

No
know
them.

I
DON'T
BELIEVE
THAT!!



YOU ARE
NEVER
GONNA
FIND A
BOYFRIEND.



OH MY
GOD!

AAAAAARGH...

AAAAAARGH...



AAAAAARGH!

AAAAAARGH!
HE PISSES
ME OFF!!

SORRY,
FOLKS, BUT
I HAVE NO
INTENTION
OF FORMING
A COMEDY
TEAM WITH
THIS GUY.

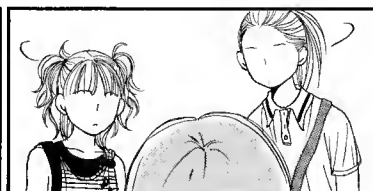
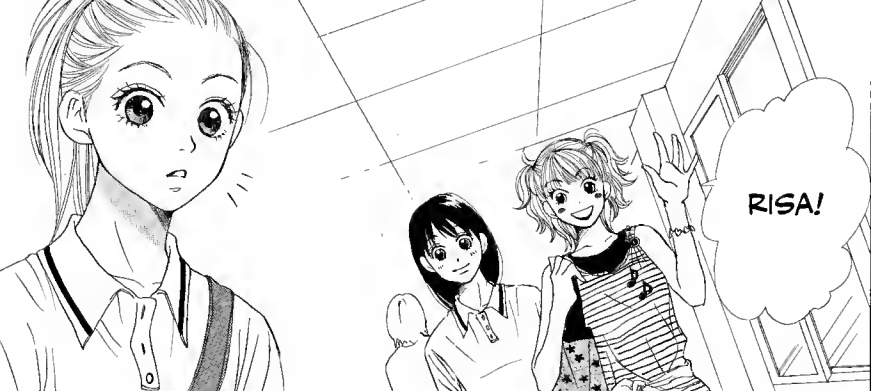


LETCHEE?
THAT'S
REALLY
GOOD.

Yeah,
letchee!
Dope.

LET-
CHEE
ABOUT
THAT!!

DOPS





JUST
WATCH
ME!

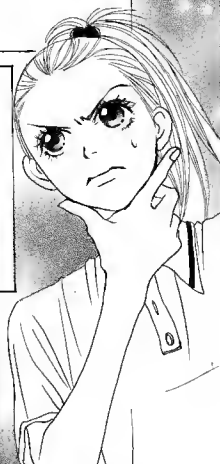
I'M
MAKING
THIS MY
SUMMER
OF
LOVE!!



THAT
DOES
IT.

IF I
DON'T FIND
MYSELF A
BOYFRIEND
SOON...

...I'M
GOING TO
BE "ALL
KYOJIN"
FOR THE
REST OF
MY LIFE.



KLAHE

WHAT
ARE
YOU
DOING
HERE?!

YOU
TOOK
THE
WORDS
RIGHT
OUTTA
MY
MOUTH!



blah

blah

at out
only
30



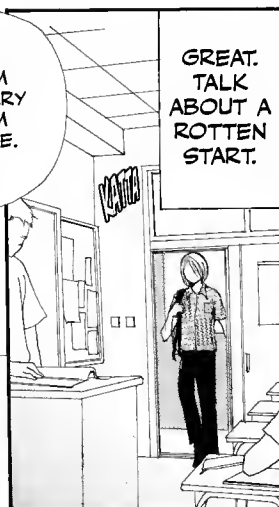
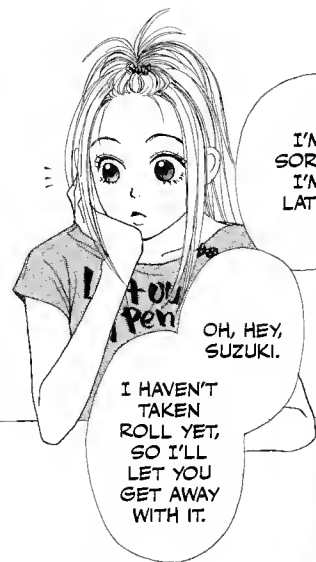
blah

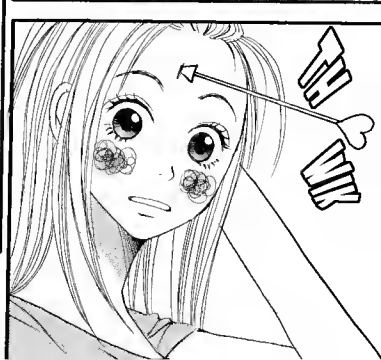
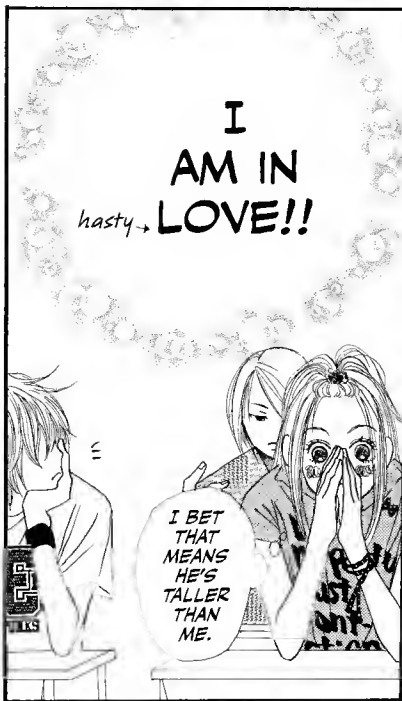
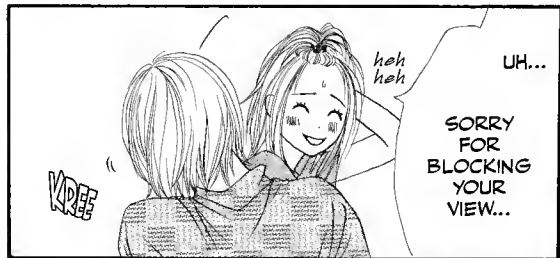
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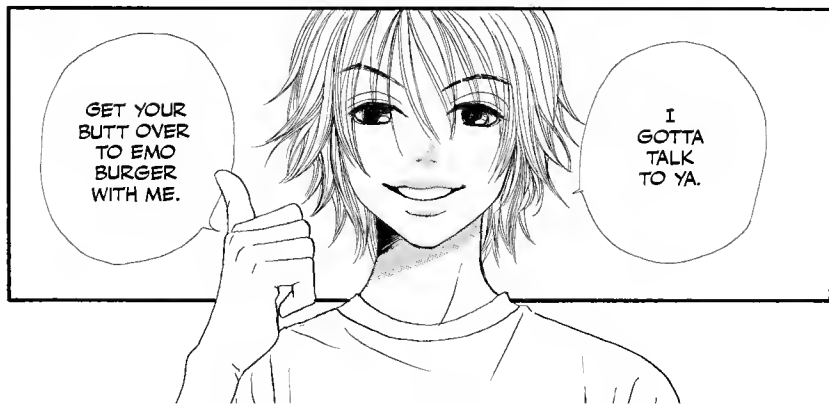
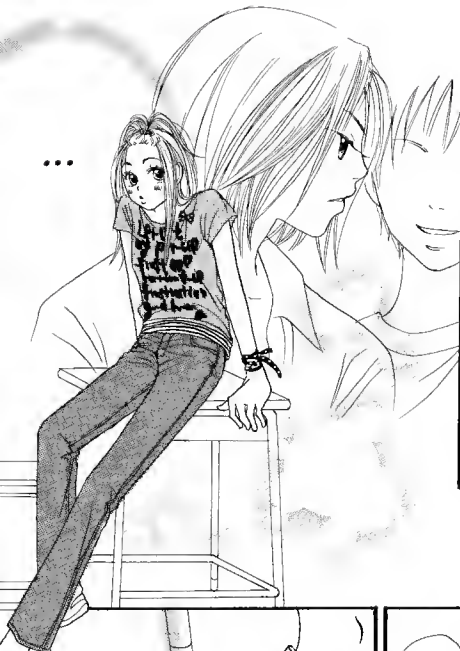
blah

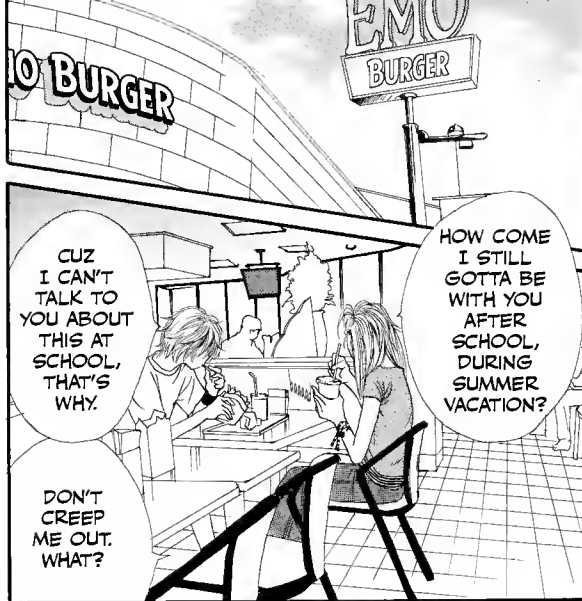














A
COMBO
MEAL!

YOU WANT
A BURGER?!!
A FISHWICH?!!
A COMBO
MEAL?!

ALL RIGHT!
WHATEVER
YOU WANT,
IT'S ON ME!

YOU
GOT
IT!

AND
...



**REALLY?!!
ARE YOU
SERIOUS?!**

AND
THEN
DO WHAT
I CAN TO
GET YOU
GUYS
TOGETHER.
HMM?

IN FACT,
I WAS
THINKING I
COULD MAKE
FRIENDS
WITH SUZUKI
IN CLASS,
SEE...

I
CERTAINLY
AM.



TANAKA.

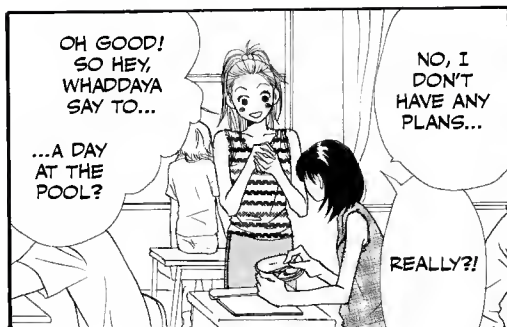
HUH?



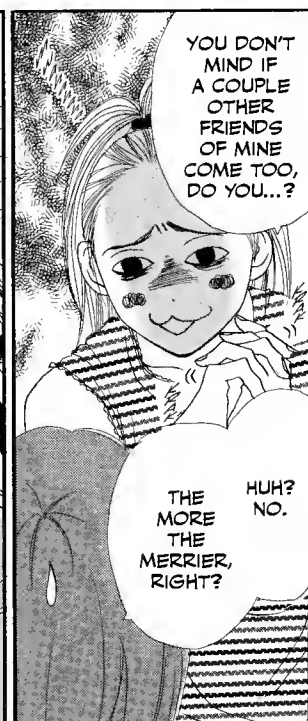
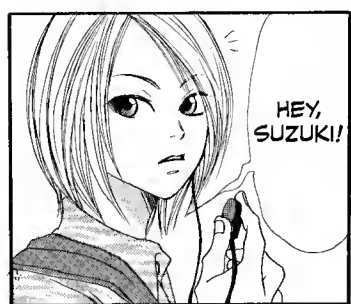
AND...



AND?



Chiharu
Tanaka



SO NOW
WE'RE ALL
GOING TO
THE POOL
TOGETHER!!

AS
ALWAYS.

LET'S
GET
GOING.

SORRY
I'M
LATE!

WANNA BE
FRIENDS
WITH ME?

UH,
OKAY...

WELL...

HE'S RIGHT,
CHIHARU
IS TOTALLY
ADORABLE.

PLUS
SHE'S
SHORTER
THAN ME.

BUT
STILL
...

I'D NEVER
HAVE
GUESSED
THAT YOU
HAD A
CRUSH ON
CHIHARU.

OHhhh.

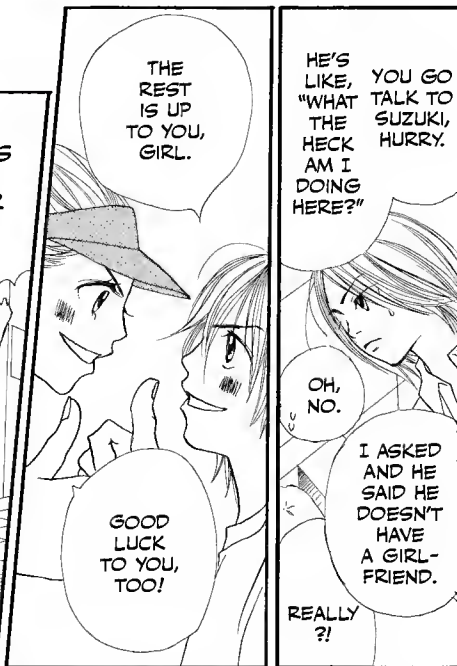
WHY
NOT,
YOU
DOPE?
SHE'S
SUPER-
CUTE!

IT WAS
LOVE
AT FIRST
SIGHT,
MAN.

GUYS
TOTALLY
SCARE
HER.

WHAT
?!

SORRY
TO SAY,
THOUGH,
I HAVE
SOME BAD
NEWS.





THANK
YOU,
ÔTANI!!

THE
STAGE
IS SET
AND I'M
GOING
FOR IT!



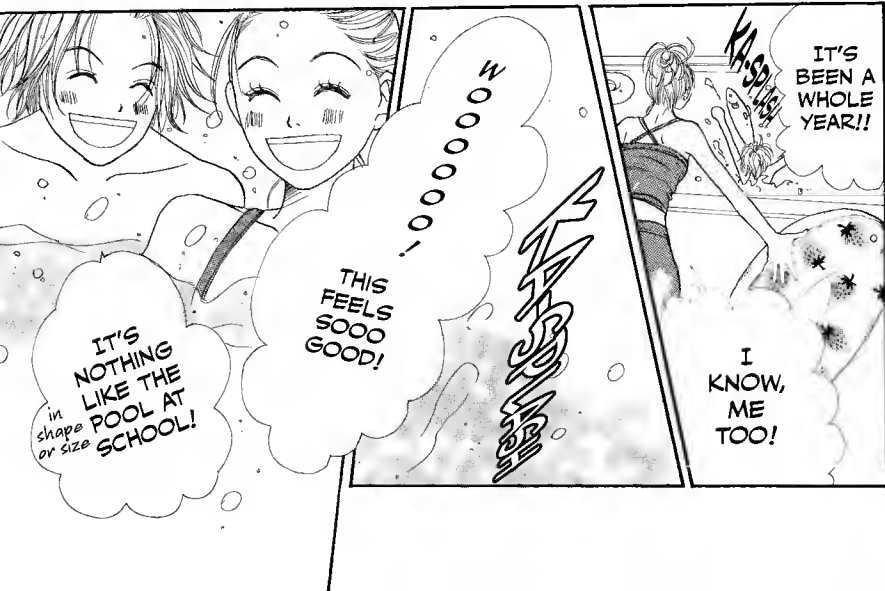
WOW...

YES,
IT IS!!

IS
IT SO
EXCIT-
ING?

IT'S
JUST
WATER
...

A DAY
AT THE
POOL!!



IT'S
NOTHING
LIKE THE
POOL AT
SCHOOL!
in
shape
or size

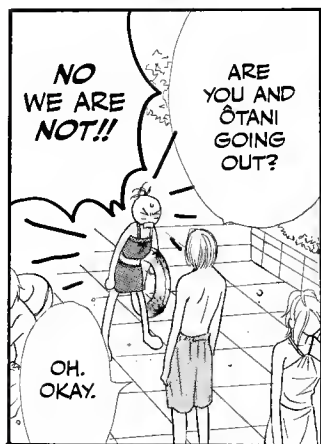
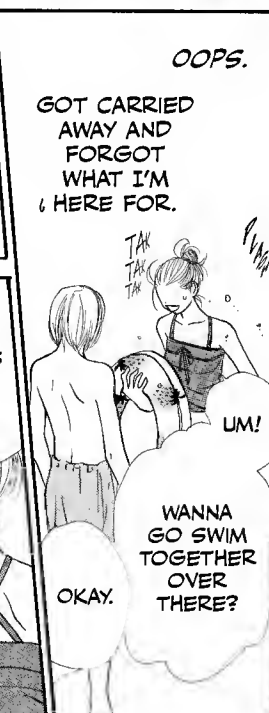
THIS
FEELS
SOOO
GOOD!

ooooooooo~

splash

IT'S
BEEN A
WHOLE
YEAR!!

I
KNOW,
ME
TOO!



...

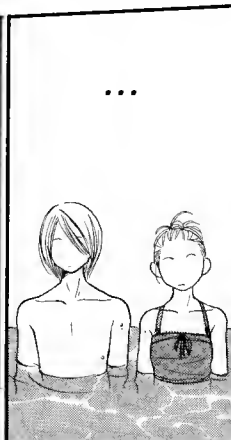
YEAH.

OHhh.
OKAY.

I MISSED
THE FINAL
CUZ I
WAS SICK.

UH-UH.

SO, IF
YOU'RE IN
SUMMER
SCHOOL,
DID YOU
FAIL YOUR
MATH
TESTS?



THAT'S
MORE
LIKE IT.

WHADJA
SAY?!

THAT'S
CUZ YOU'RE
BEING
ALL FAKE
AND NICE.

WELL,
I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT
TO TALK
ABOUT!

LIKE
YOU WERE
HAVING SO
MUCH FUN
DOING
NOTHING?!

"IF YOU
WANT"?!
JEEZ!

JUST BE
YOURSELF,
KOIZUMI.
ACT
NORMAL!

SHMP

!

HEY, THAT
REALLY
HURT!!

OKAY!

HERE
WE GO!

7.

Hello, nice to meet you! And if we've already met, hello again!
Aya Nakahara here.

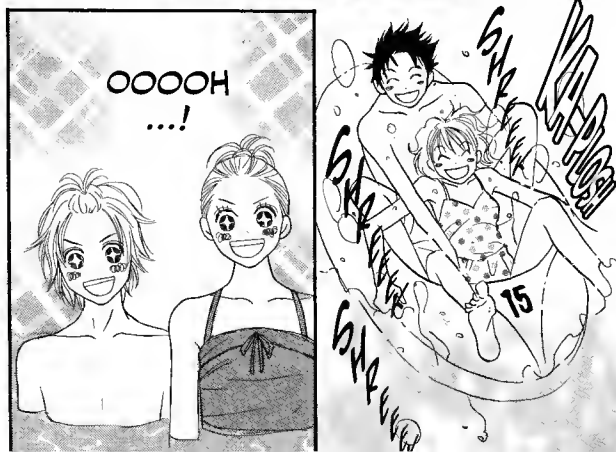
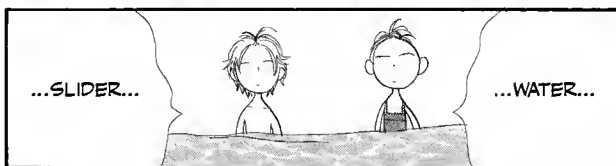
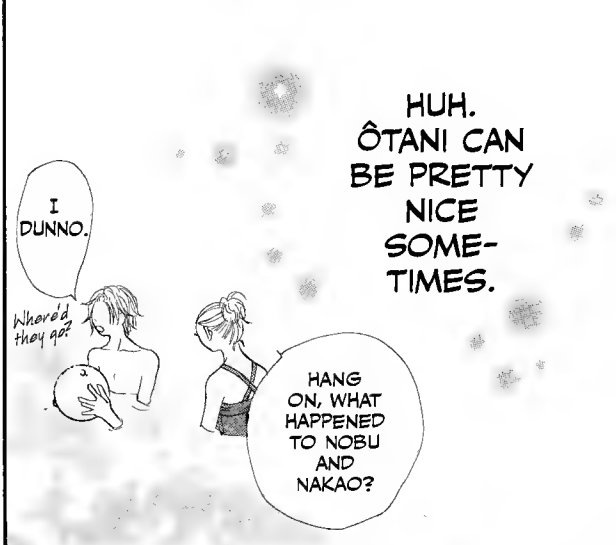
nyuween

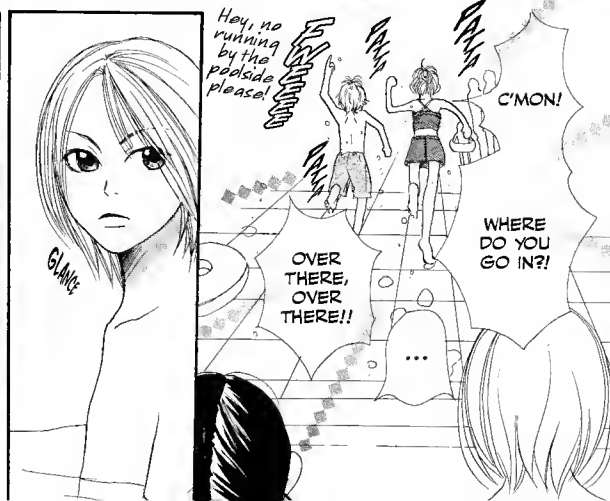
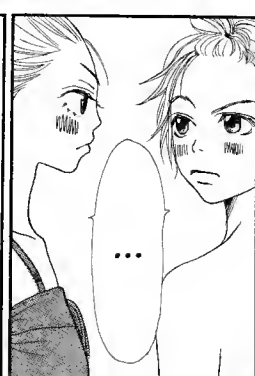
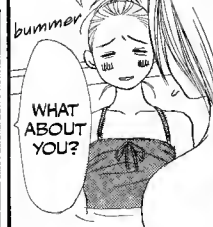
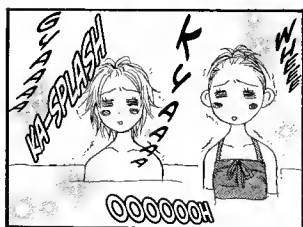
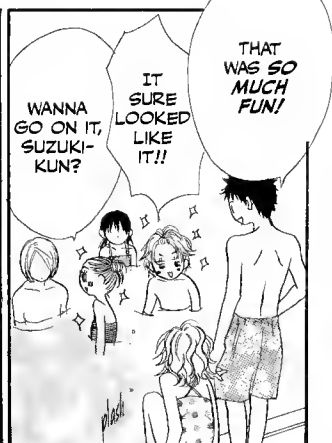
This is already my eleventh book of manga. Now, that happened fast!
"Love☆Com"
is apparently short for
"Lovely Complex."
(hearsay)

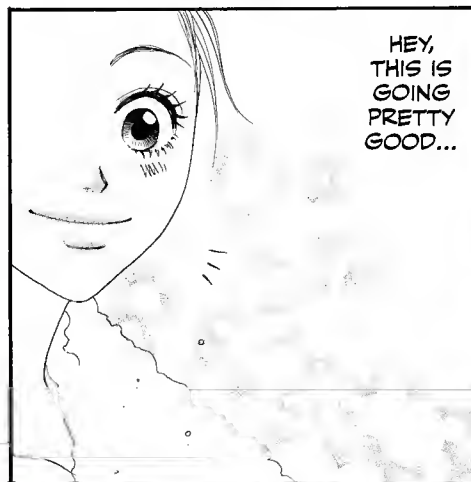
I just couldn't come up with a title for this series, so I ended up relying on my editor's wisdom. And since everything seems to get abbreviated these days, we decided to go ahead and abbreviate it for you right from the start.

The ☆ is there like the little paper flag they stick into kids' lunches. That is, it's a sort of decoration. But having to draw it in myself can sometimes be a pain.
Love & Com

↑ This is a mistake.







...CHIHARU'S
BOY-
PHOBIA
IS TOTALLY
CURED,
JUST LIKE
HE SAID.

I
MEAN
...

ÔTANI
AND
CHIHARU
ARE
LOOKING
PRETTY
GOOD
TOO.

Look
how
dark
you
got.
I
know,
I tan
really
fast.

HE'S
PRETTY
AMAZING.

hee
hee

Bye,
you
guys!

NERVOUS

SHE'LL
BE
FINE.

SUZUKI'S
A GOOD
GUY.

YOU
THINK
CHIHARU'S
GOING
TO BE
OKAY?

I GUESS
CHIHARU
AND
SUZUKI
LIVE
IN THE SAME
DIRECTION.

HEY,
THANKS.

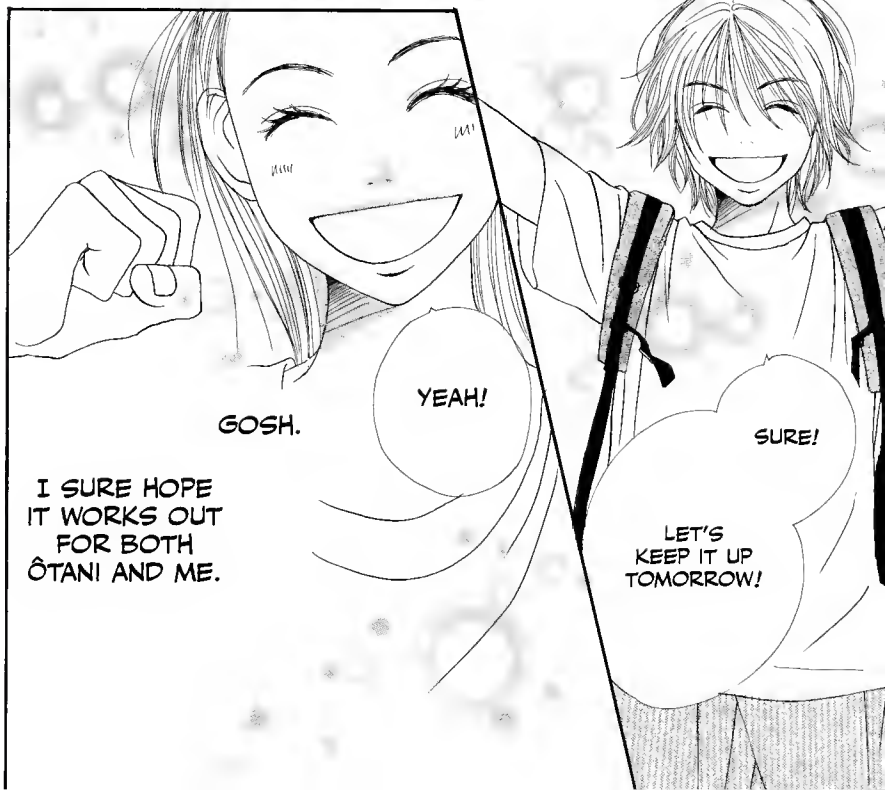
FOR
SETTING
IT UP.



THAT'S
RIGHT,
YOU GUYS
WERE
LOOKING
GOOD!

AND
RIGHT
NOW, ALL
SHE CAN
THINK
ABOUT
IS ME!
♡

YEAH,
SO WERE
YOU AND
SUZUKI.



GOSH.

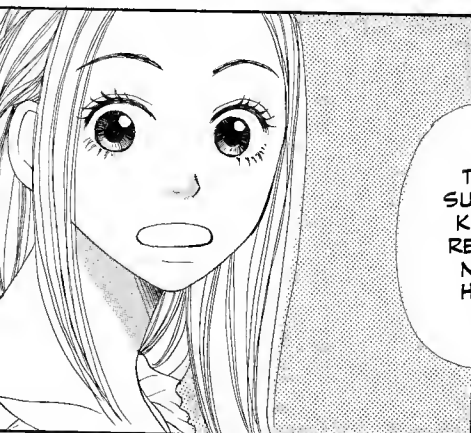
YEAH!

I SURE HOPE
IT WORKS OUT
FOR BOTH
ÔTANI AND ME.

SURE!

LET'S
KEEP IT UP
TOMORROW!

HEY, DUDE.
LET'S BOTH
MAKE THIS
A SUMMER
OF LOVE!



THAT
SUZUKI-
KUN'S
REALLY
NICE,
HUH?



...



LIKE,
YESTERDAY
HE WALKED
ME ALL THE
WAY HOME.

HE'S
JUST
REALLY
CONSID-
ERATE.

HE
DID
...?

SURE
IS.

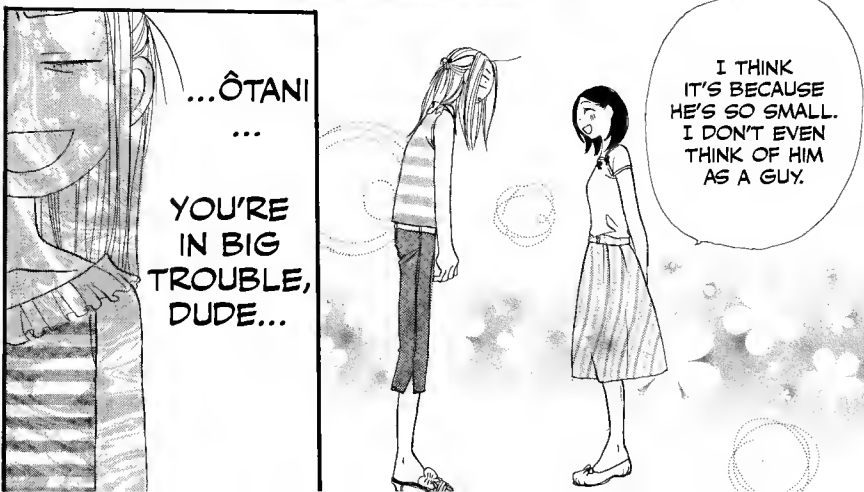
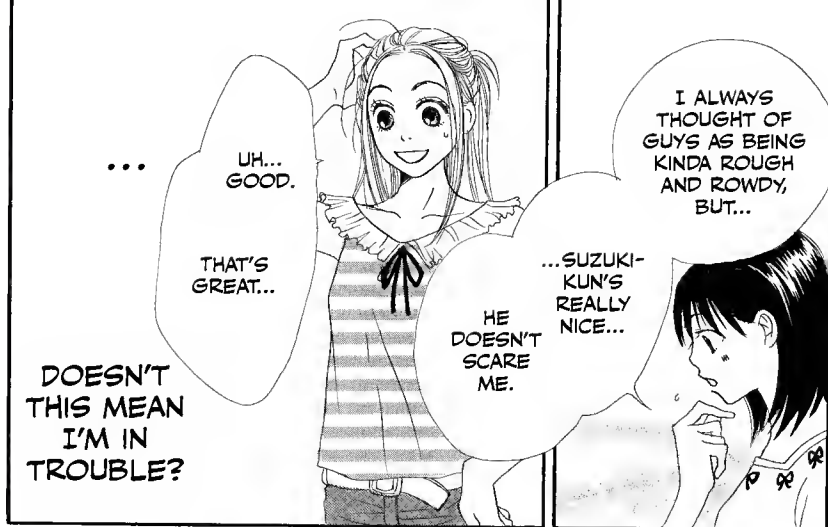


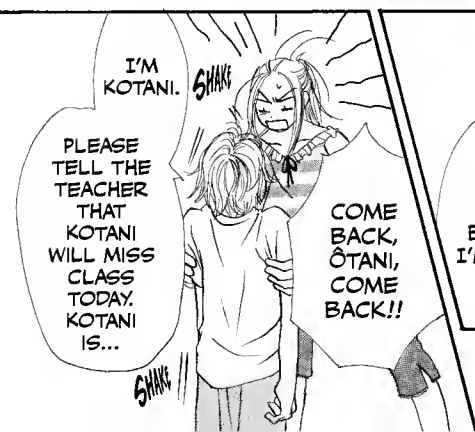
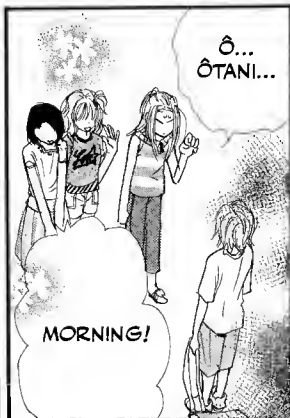
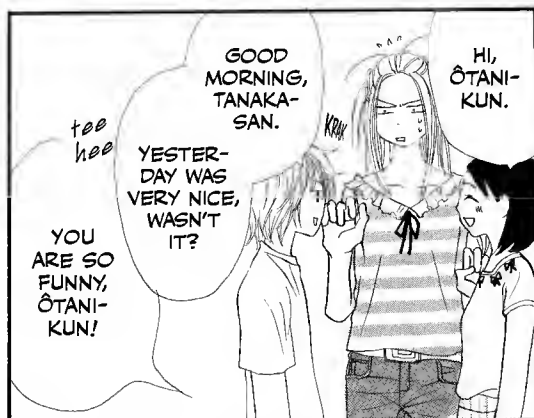
I DIDN'T
MEAN
IT LIKE
THAT, I
SWEAR.

NO
WAY!!

ARE YOU
SAYING
WHAT I
THINK
YOU'RE
...

NO,
NO!
RISA!







KOTA-
NI!!!!!!



DASH

KO...



IT'S
ÔTANI.



KOTANI...

OOPS

ÔTANI!!

YOU'LL
BE OKAY,
ÔTANI!!



ÔTANI!



GO AHEAD,
YOU GUYS.
I'M GOING
AFTER
KOTANI!



IT'S
ÔTANI.



...I
TOLD
YOU,
IT'S
KÔTANI,
ALL
RIGHT?

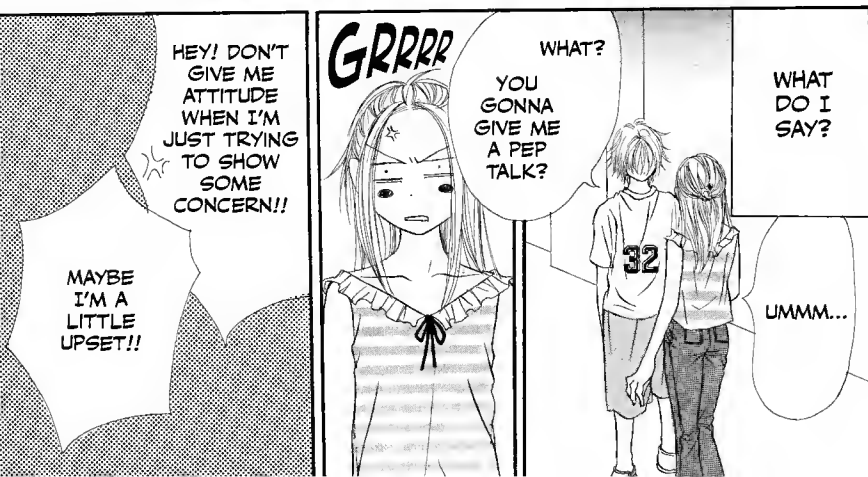
32

hank

32

NOW
WHAT?

...



HEY! DON'T
GIVE ME
ATTITUDE
WHEN I'M
JUST TRYING
TO SHOW
SOME
CONCERN!!

MAYBE
I'M A
LITTLE
UPSET!!

GRRRR

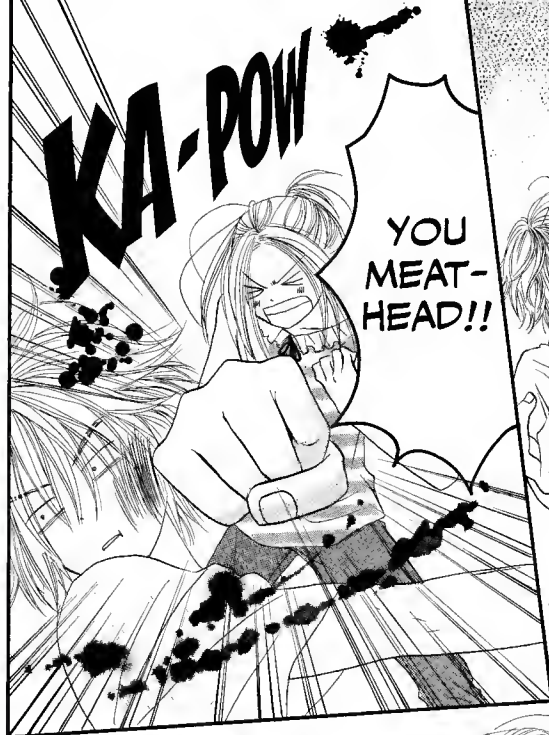
WHAT?

YOU
GONNA
GIVE ME
A PEP
TALK?

WHAT
DO I
SAY?

UMMM...

32



KA-POW

**YOU
MEAT-
HEAD!!**



SO
SHE SAID
YOU'RE
SMALL,
BIG DEAL!

BE A
MAN
ABOUT
IT!

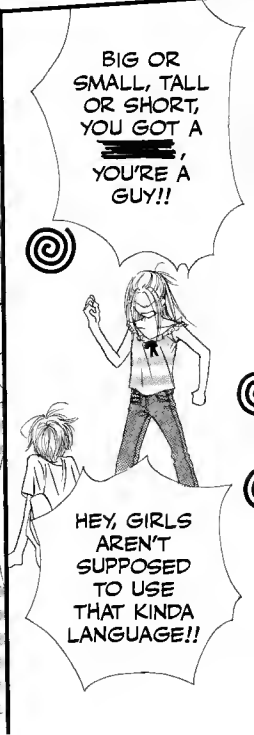
SHE'S
SAYING I'M
NOT A MAN
BECAUSE
I'M SMALL!!



AND THEN
A GIRL
YOU LIKE
SAYS IT
ONE SINGLE
TIME AND
YOU'RE LIKE,
SCARRED
FOR LIFE?!

LOOK,
YOU'VE
BEEN
CALLED
SMALL AT
LEAST A
THOUSAND
TIMES!

**WHO
CARES?!**



BIG OR
SMALL, TALL
OR SHORT,
YOU GOT A
,
YOU'RE A
GUY!!

HEY, GIRLS
AREN'T
SUPPOSED
TO USE
THAT KINDA
LANGUAGE!!

SCUM!

SCUM!

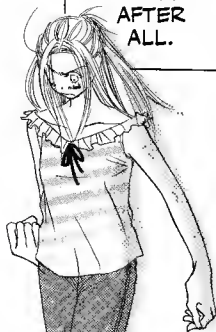
32

...DON'T
EVER
FALL IN
LOVE
AGAIN!

THAT'S
PATHETIC!
WELL,
IF THAT'S
WHAT
YOU'RE
LIKE...

K
L
A

JUST WHEN
I WAS
STARTING
TO THINK
HE MIGHT
BE OKAY
AFTER
ALL.



WELL,
FORGET
HIM!

I'M
GONNA
GO FOR
IT ALL BY
MYSELF,
THEN!

...YOU
HIT ME
RIGHT
WHERE IT
HURTS
JUMBO
GAL.

HFF

AAARGH,
I SWEAR!

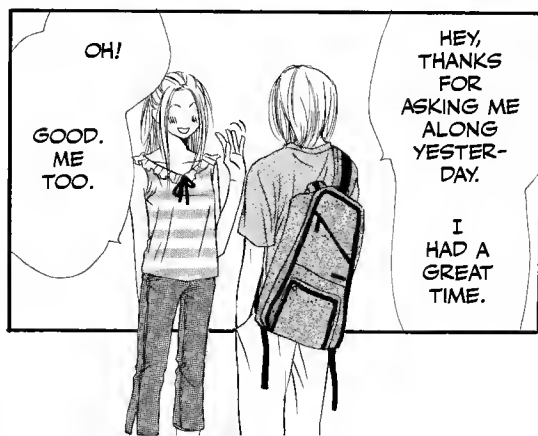
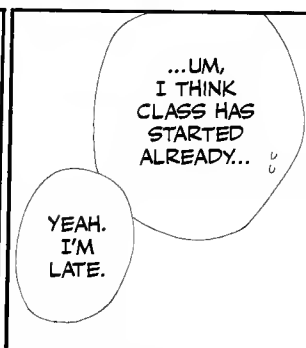
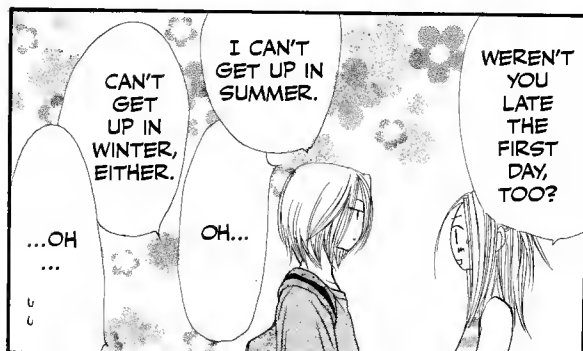
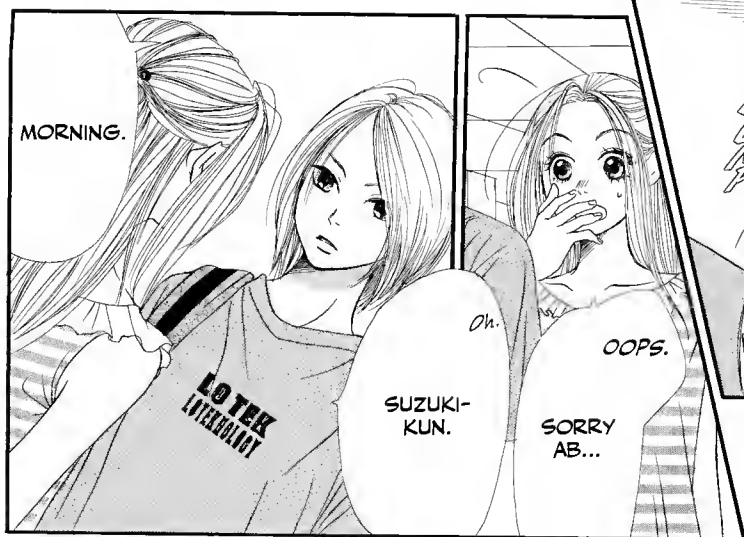
THAT
REALLY
PISSES
ME
OFF!!

STUFF
LIKE
THAT
JUST
REALLY
GETS
ME!!



I
THOUGHT
HE
SAID
HE WAS
GOING
FOR
IT.

THAT
STUPID
SHRIMP.



TANAKA-
SAN
SEEMED
KINDA
SCARED
OF ME
YESTERDAY.

HEH?

AM I
SCARY?

EEK
LOOY

...UMM-

YEAH?

SHE'S
SCARED
OF GUYS IN
GENERAL.

SO I
DON'T THINK
IT'S YOU IN
PARTICULAR.

OKAY...

"THAT
SUZUKI-
KUN'S
REALLY
NICE,
HUH?"

OH...

THAT'S
RIGHT.

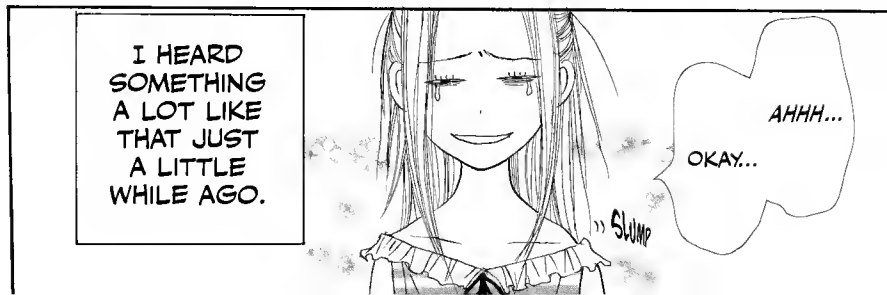
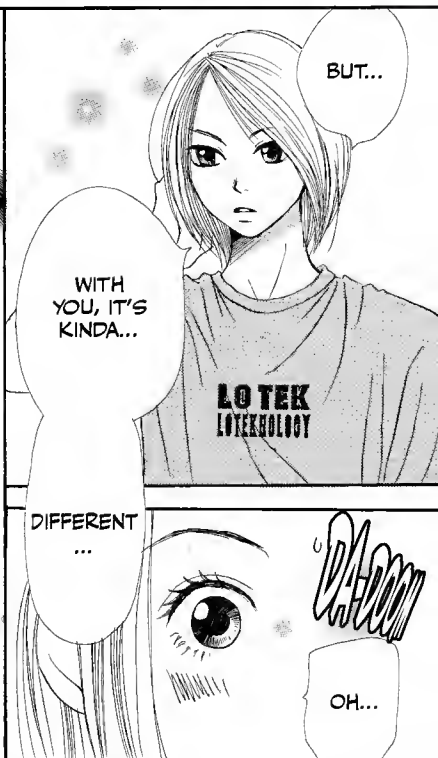
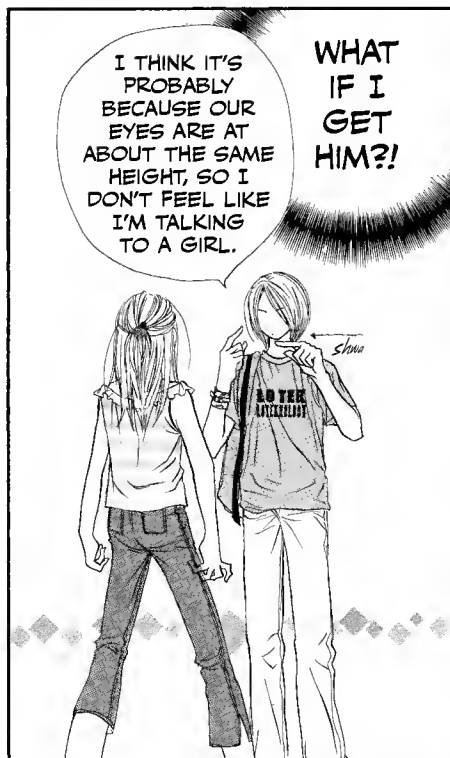
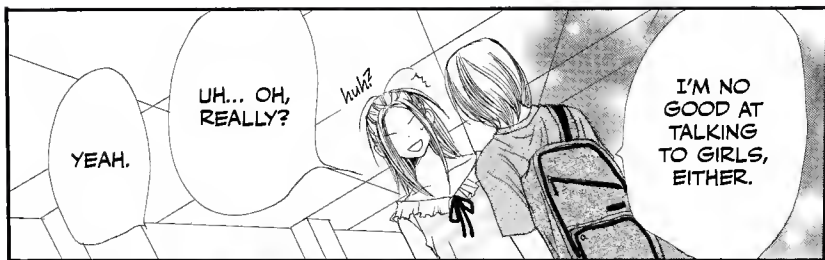
WHAT
WOULD
HAPPEN
IF I
GOT
HIM?

JUST
WHAT
IF!

WHAT
IF...

...AND
SHE JUST
HASN'T
NOTICED
IT YET.

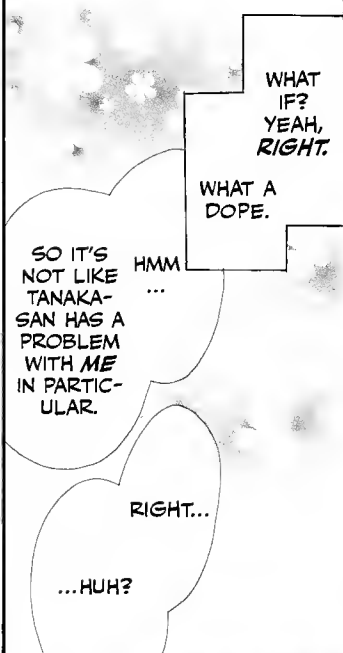
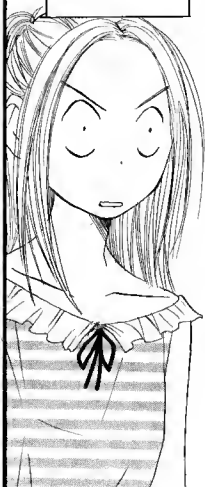
MAYBE
CHIHARU
HAS A
LITTLE
CRUSH
ON
HIM...





EXCUSE
ME?

HUH?



WHAT
IF?
YEAH,
RIGHT.

WHAT A
DOPE.

SO IT'S
NOT LIKE
TANAKA-
SAN HAS A
PROBLEM
WITH *ME*
IN PARTIC-
ULAR.

HMM
...

RIGHT...

...HUH?

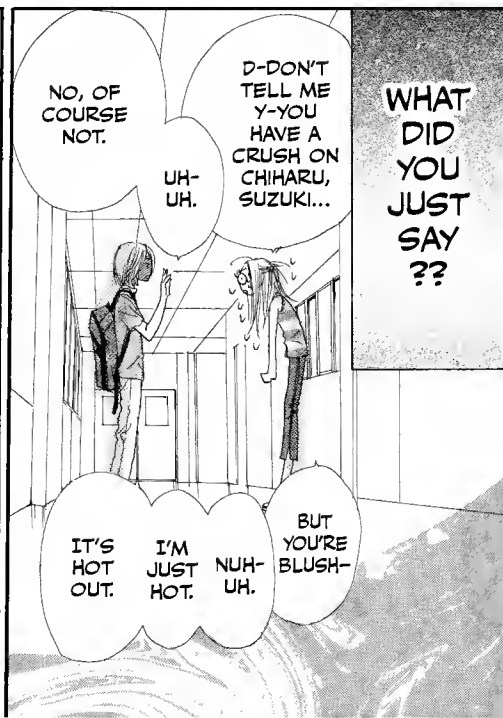


WELL.
I...

...BETTER
GET TO
CLASS.



I
DON'T,
OKAY?



NO, OF
COURSE
NOT.

UH-
UH.

D-DON'T
TELL ME
Y-YOU
HAVE A
CRUSH ON
CHIHARU,
SUZUKI...

WHAT
DID
YOU
JUST
SAY
??

IT'S
HOT
OUT.

I'M
JUST
HOT.

NUH-
UH.

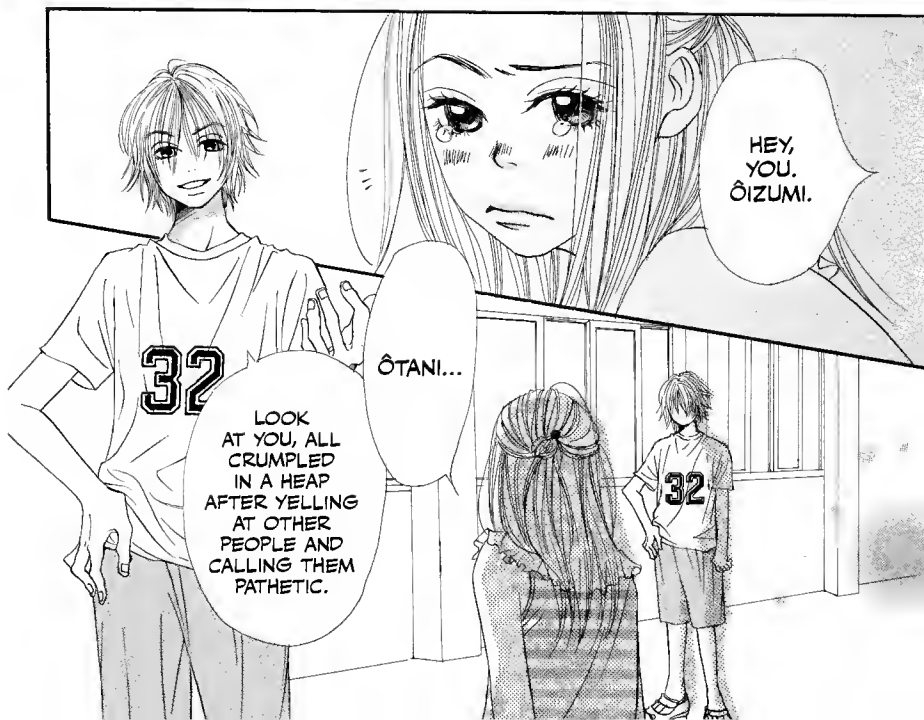
BUT
YOU'RE
BLUSH-



IT'S
TOTALLY
OBVIOUS!

HE
TOTALLY
HAS A
CRUSH
ON HER!

NO WAY.
I DON'T
BELIEVE
THIS.



HEY,
YOU.
ÔIZUMI.

ÔTANI...

LOOK
AT YOU, ALL
CRUMPLED
IN A HEAP
AFTER YELLING
AT OTHER
PEOPLE AND
CALLING THEM
PATHETIC.

32

32

EVEN IF
YOU THINK
YOU'RE
USED TO IT,
MOST OF
THE TIME...

IT REALLY
HURTS
WHEN THE
GUY YOU
LIKE SAYS
IT...

IT DOES
REALLY
GET YOU
DOWN...

WHAT'S
UP WITH
THAT?!

...SORRY.

I TAKE
ALL THAT
STUFF
BACK.
FORGET
I EVER
SAID IT.

hyper-
cute!

32

Bummin

I
DON'T
EVEN
...

A JUMBO-
GAL
LIKE ME
DOESN'T
EVEN
COUNT...

MIGHT'VE
KNOWN
SUZUKI
WOULD
PREFER
A CUTE,
TINY
GIRL...

I can't
believe
you
socked
me!!

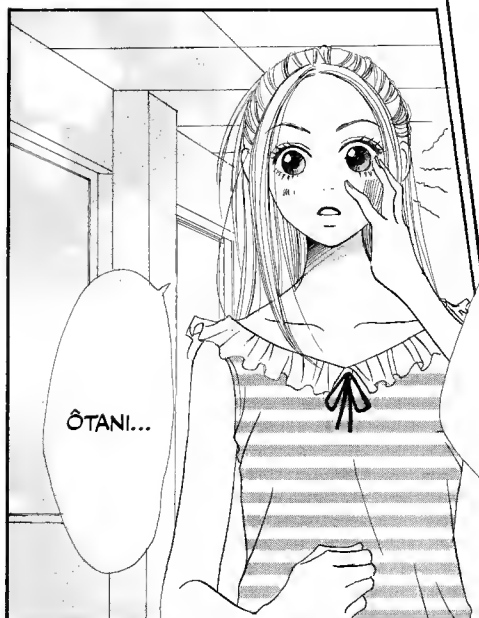
mwa
ha ha
ha

HEY,
THAT
HURT!!

KA-POW

PAY-
BACK
TIME,
SO
THERE!

YOU
MEAT-
HEAD!!

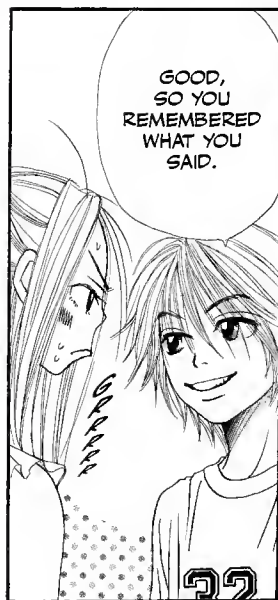


ÔTANI...



I'M
STILL
GOING
AFTER
HER!

I'M NOT
GIVING
UP ON
CHIHARU,
YOU GOT
THAT?!



GOOD,
SO YOU
REMEMBERED
WHAT YOU
SAID.



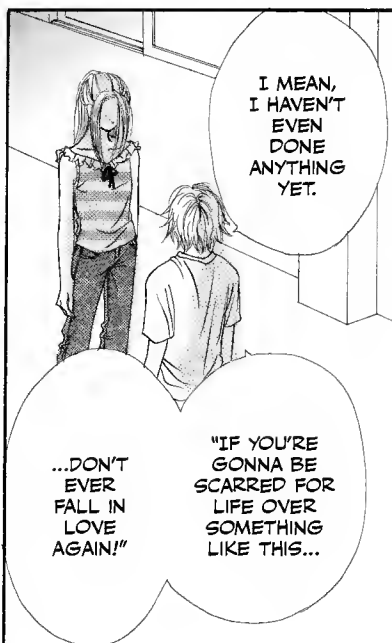
THOSE
WERE MY
GRANDPA'S
DYING
WORDS...

snit

32

I'M
THE
ONE
WHO
SAID
THAT!!

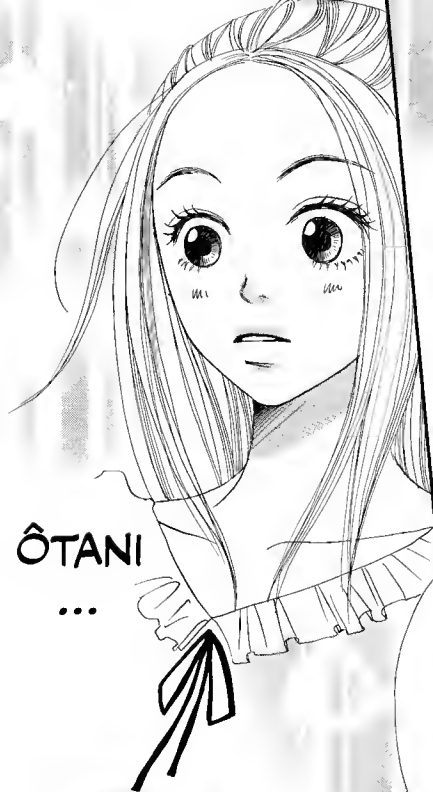
WAIT A
MINUTE!



I MEAN,
I HAVEN'T
EVEN
DONE
ANYTHING
YET.

...DON'T
EVER
FALL IN
LOVE
AGAIN!"

"IF YOU'RE
GONNA BE
SCARRED FOR
LIFE OVER
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS...



ÔTANI

...



HEY, I'M
REALLY
GLAD I
HAD YOU
AROUND
TODAY.

CUZ IF
I DIDN'T,
I'D HAVE
JUST
STAYED
REALLY
BUMMED
OUT.

BUT WE
BOTH HAVE
THE SAME
COMPLEX:
OUR
HEIGHT.

OUR
PROBLEMS
ARE THE
EXACT
OPPOSITE...

BUT I
PROBABLY
UNDER-
STAND HIS
FEELINGS
BETTER
THAN
ANYONE
ELSE.

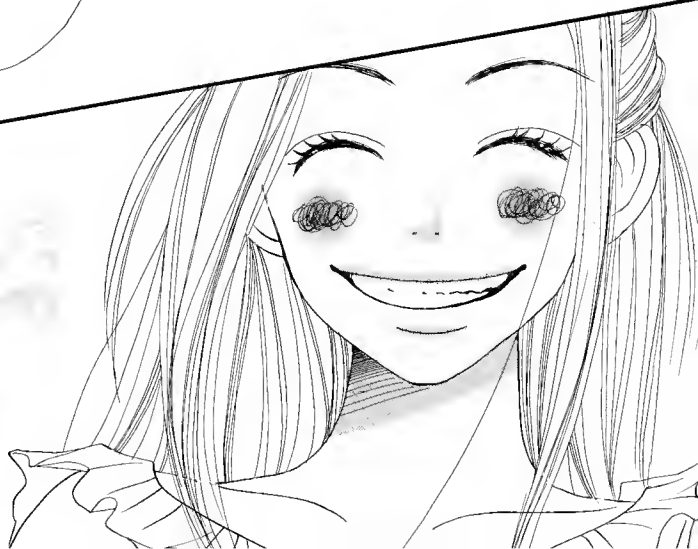
THIS
GUY
REALLY
PISSES
ME OFF
SOME-
TIMES.

SO WHEN
ÔTANI SAYS
HE'S GOING
TO GO
FOR IT...

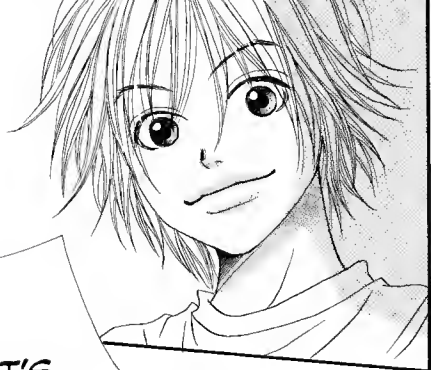
...IT MAKES
ME FEEL
LIKE I CAN,
TOO.

YEAH.

AND I'M
GONNA
GO AFTER
SUZUKI!



THANKS
FOR
YELLING
AT ME,
ÔTANI.



LET'S
GO
FOR
IT!!

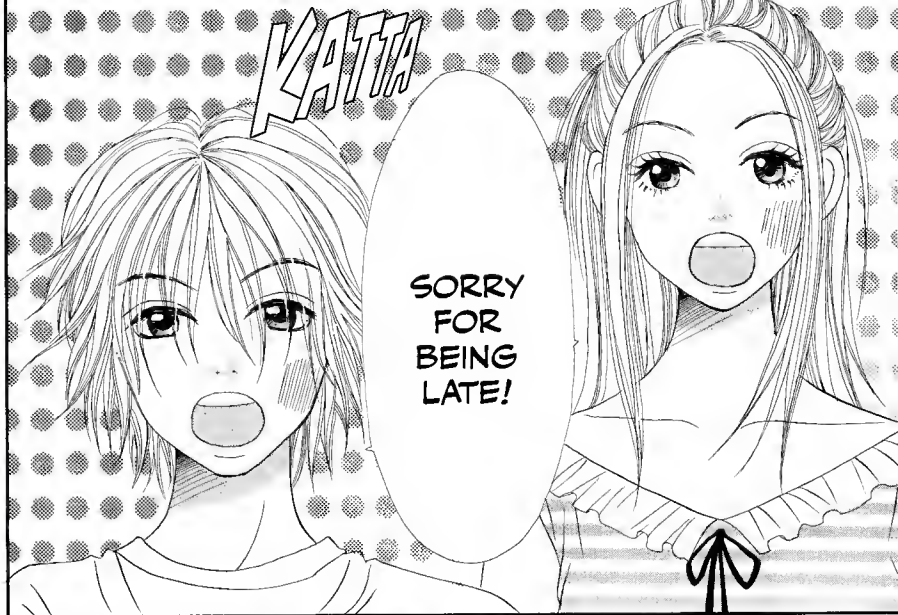
SNAP

CUZ IF I
GIVE UP
NOW

...

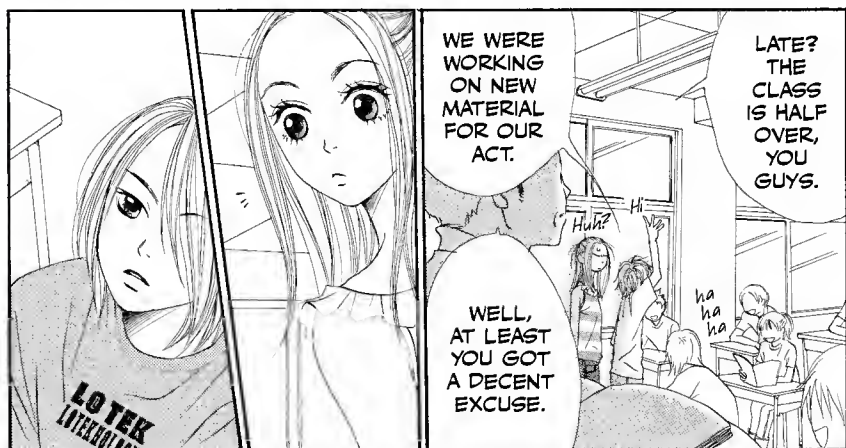
...I'LL END
UP HUNCHED
OVER, ALWAYS
WORRIED
ABOUT MY
HEIGHT.





KATTA

SORRY
FOR
BEING
LATE!



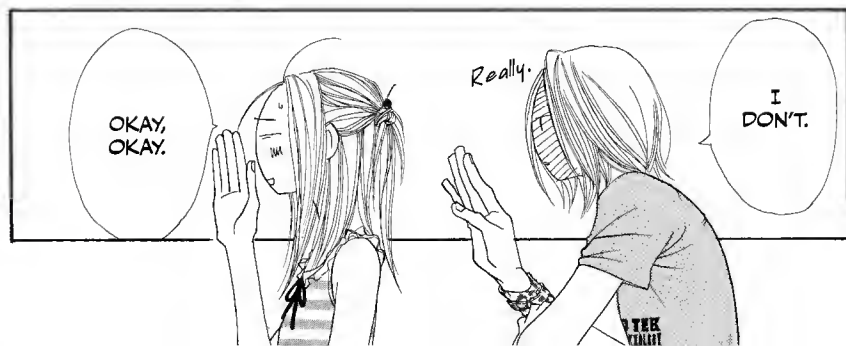
WE WERE
WORKING
ON NEW
MATERIAL
FOR OUR
ACT.

WELL,
AT LEAST
YOU GOT
A DECENT
EXCUSE.

LATE?
THE
CLASS
IS HALF
OVER,
YOU
GUYS.

Huh?

ha
ha
ha



OKAY,
OKAY.

Really.

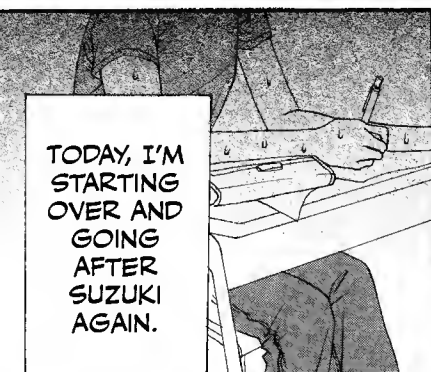
I
DON'T.



SO,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
...WHERE IS
THE STORY
OF THIS
LOPSIDED
DUO GOING
TO LEAD?







CHAPTER 2

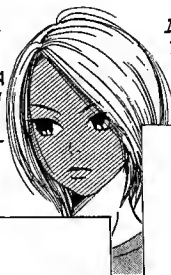


SO, TO
KEEP MY
MIND OFF
OF THAT
STUFF, I
STAYED UP
ALL NIGHT
GAMING.



"I THINK IT'S
PROBABLY
BECAUSE OUR
EYES ARE AT
ABOUT THE
SAME HEIGHT,
SO I DON'T
FEEL LIKE
I'M TALKING
TO A GIRL."

"SO IT'S
NOT LIKE
TANAKA-
SAN HAS A
PROBLEM
WITH ME
IN PARTIC-
ULAR."



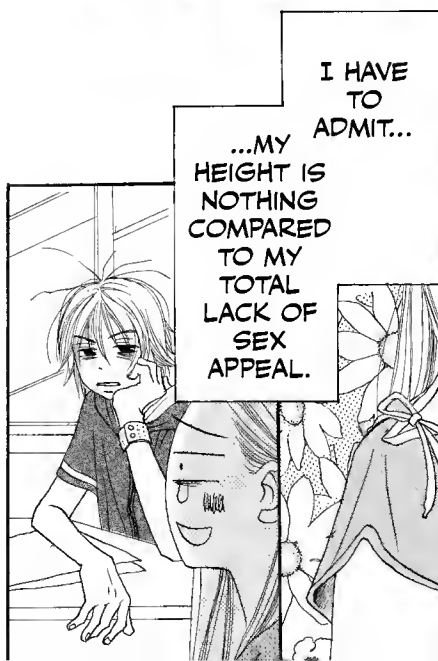
I CAN'T
LET
STUFF
LIKE
THAT
GET
TO ME.



WERE
YOU
JUST
GAMING
IN YOUR
SLEEP?

UH...

I'M JUST
GOING TO
FORGET
ALL
ABOUT IT.



I HAVE
TO
ADMIT...

...MY
HEIGHT IS
NOTHING
COMPARED
TO MY
TOTAL
LACK OF
SEX
APPEAL.



HEH
HEH...

WELL.



WHAT
AM I
SUPPOSED
TO DO?
HOW
SHOULD
I GO
AFTER
HIM?

I SWEAR,
I CANNOT
BELIEVE
WHAT
A GIANT
DORK
YOU ARE.

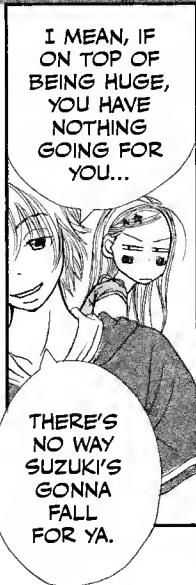
A
SECRET
MEETING?



HUH?
WHERE'D
RISA
GO?

SHE
SAID SHE
HAD SOME
SECRET
MEETING
WITH ÔTANI.

and
took
off.



I MEAN, IF
ON TOP OF
BEING HUGE,
YOU HAVE
NOTHING
GOING FOR
YOU...

THERE'S
NO WAY
SUZUKI'S
GONNA
FALL
FOR YA.



*I see it
even
in my
dreams...*

...USE
IT TO
MAKE
YOUR-
SELF
HOT!

YESSIR
...

YOU GOT
TIME TO
OBSS
OVER
YOUR
GAMING
...



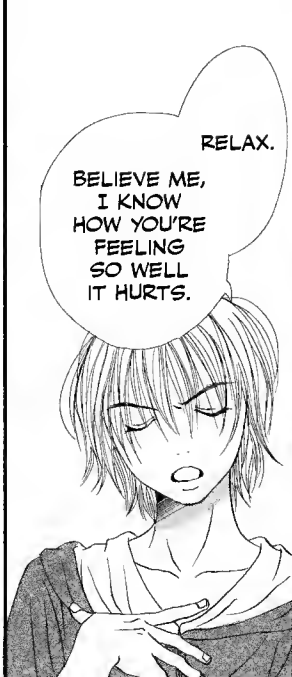
I GOT
KINDA
OBSESSED
WITH
BEATING
THE LAST
BOSS,
SEE...





ÔTANI...

"I DON'T
EVEN
THINK OF
HIM AS
A GUY."



RELAX.

BELIEVE ME,
I KNOW
HOW YOU'RE
FEELING
SO WELL
IT HURTS.



HEY! DON'T
PUSH IT,
KIDDO!
YOU EVER
HEARD OF
DIPLOMATIC
LANGUAGE?

LOOK, THIS IS
YOUR PARDNER
HERE JUST
GIVING YOU
SOME HONEST
ADVICE, OKAY?



JUST
LEAVE
ME
ALONE
!!

SO
YOU CAN
DO "NORI-
TSUKKOMI."
GREAT,
WE'LL ADD
IT TO OUR
REPER-
TORY.

HEY, YOU
PICKIN'
A FIGHT
WITH ME,
BEAN-
POLE?!

Ha!

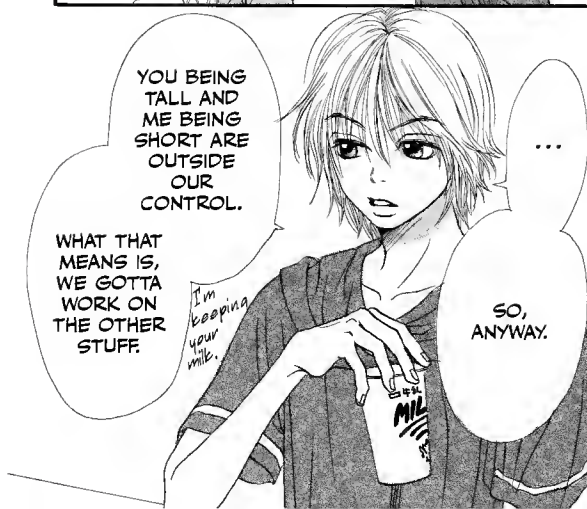


DRINK IT UP,
KID. LET'S
BUILD THAT
DINKY, UNDER-
SIZED BODY
OF YOURS SO
IT AT LEAST
STARTS TO
RESEMBLE
A MAN'S!

HERE,
TAKE MY
MILK.

THANKS,
I WILL.
I'LL DO
MY BEST TO
GROW

...



YOU BEING
TALL AND
ME BEING
SHORT ARE
OUTSIDE
OUR
CONTROL.

WHAT THAT
MEANS IS,
WE GOTTA
WORK ON
THE OTHER
STUFF.

*I'm
keeping
your
milk.*

SO,
ANYWAY.

THIS IS
KIND OF
WEIRD.

I
KNOW
THAT.

OMIGOD!!
THAT'S
RIGHT,
I WON'T
HAVE CLASS
WITH HIM
ANYMORE!

YOU
WIMPING
OUT
ALREADY?

LISTEN,
SUMMER
SCHOOL'S
GONNA BE
OVER IN A
WEEK, ALL
RIGHT?

AND NOW
HERE WE
ARE GOING
HOME
TOGETHER
AND HAVING
THESE
STRATEGY
SESSIONS...

I MEAN, I
THOUGHT
OF ÔTANI
AS A
TOTAL
PAIN.

I'M
RUNNING
OUT OF
TIME!

CUZ ME
AND
TANAKA
ARE IN THE
SAME
CLASS ALL
YEAR.

I GOT
THE
EDGE
OVER
YOU THERE.

HEY,
DON'T
PANIC.

Yipes

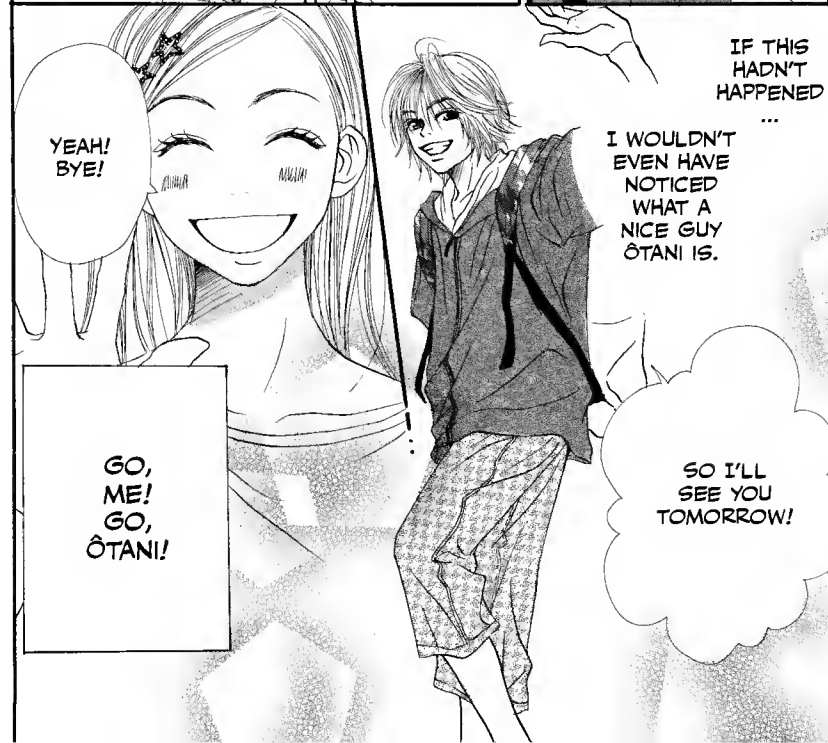
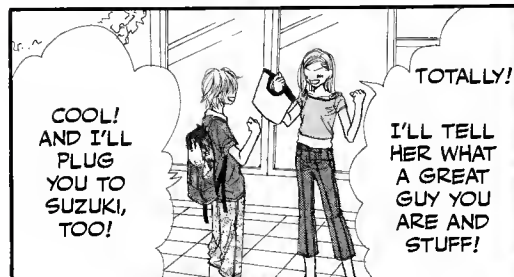
I DON'T
KNOW...
YOU
THINK?

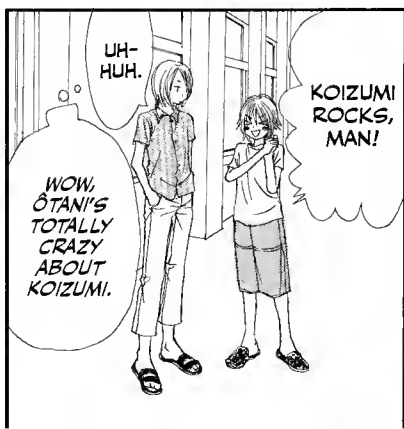
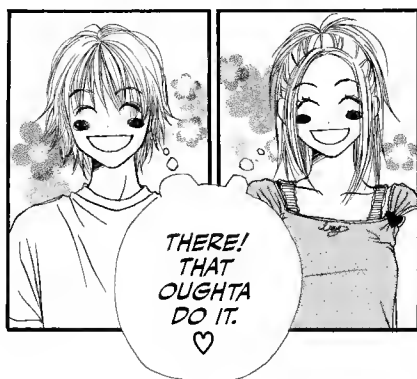
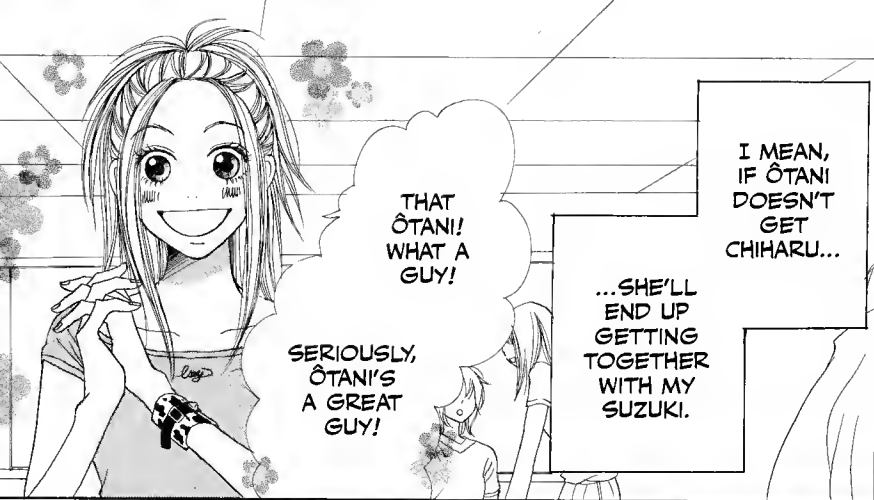
IT'S
NOT LIKE
THOSE TWO
ALREADY
GOT
TOGETHER
OR ANY-
THING.

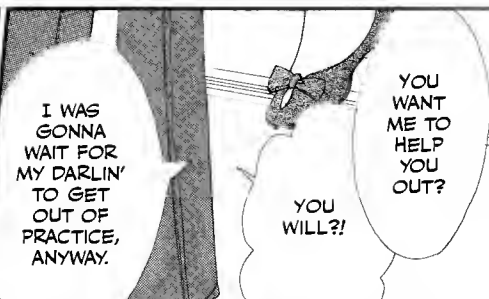
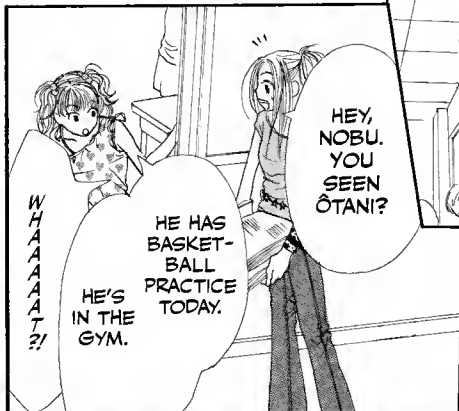
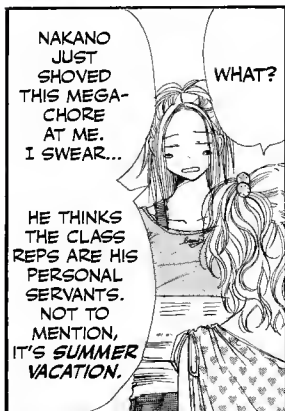
IF WE
REALLY
HUSTLE,
WE STILL
HAVE A
CHANCE.

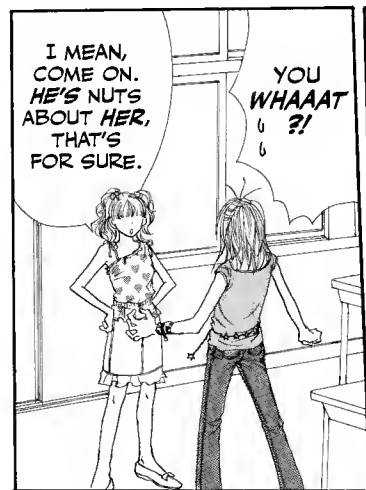
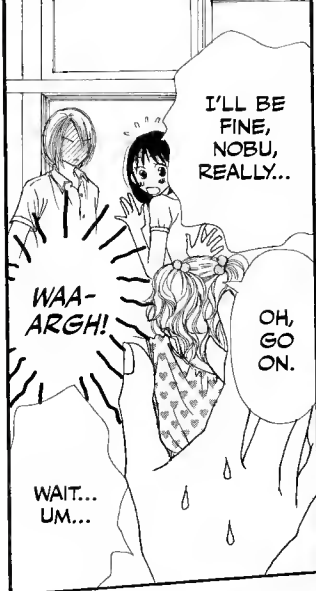


REALLY?!









LIKE, DUH.
IT'S ONLY
TOTALLY
OBVIOUS.

...YOU
THINK
...?

...

...

YOU
HELP
THEM
OUT
TOO,
RISA!

SO!

YEAH...
I
GUESS
...

AND SHE
KINDA
SEEMS TO
LIKE HIM,
TOO.

Bzzzzz

...GOING
FOR IT IS
JUST A
WASTE OF
TIME...

...
MAYBE
...

Why
me,
of all
people
...

WHAT?

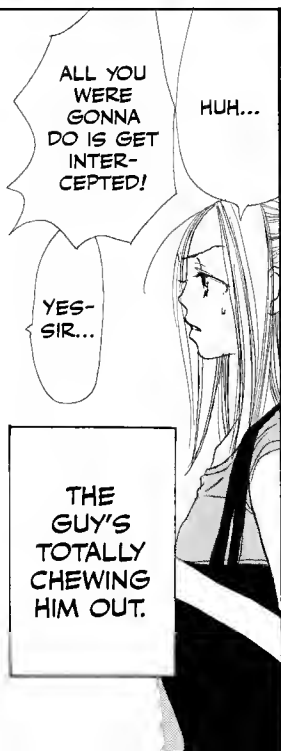
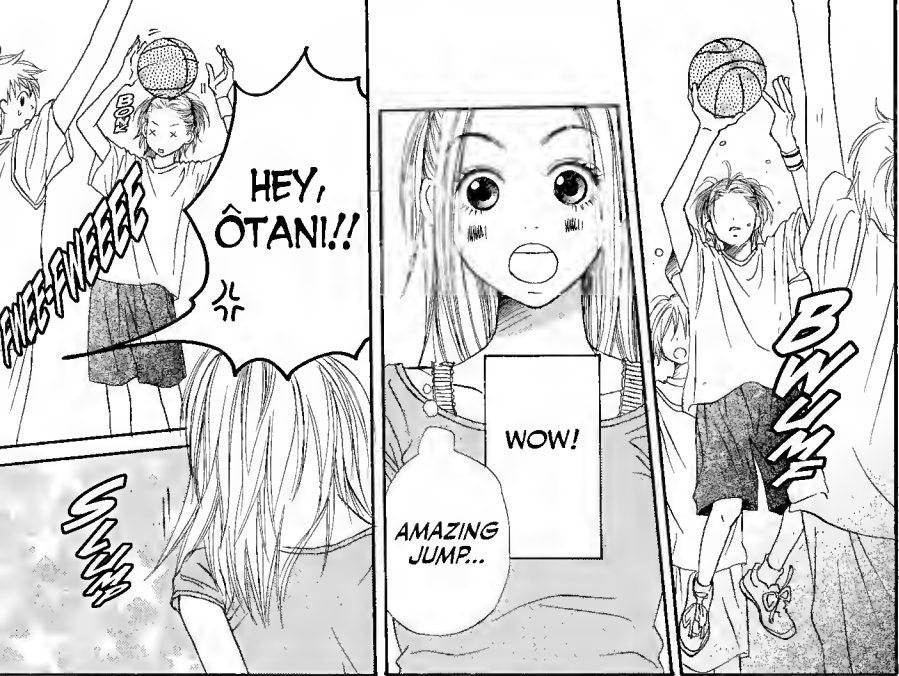
UH,
NOTHING.

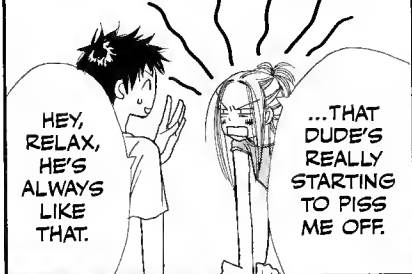
FWEE

SWEE

SWEE

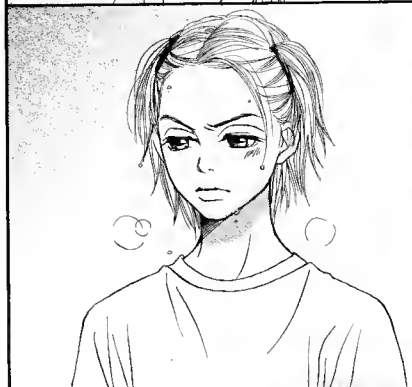






HEY,
RELAX,
HE'S
ALWAYS
LIKE
THAT.

...THAT
DUDE'S
REALLY
STARTING
TO PISS
ME OFF.



THINK
ABOUT
YOUR
HEIGHT
BEFORE
YOU GO
JUMPING,
SHORTY!!

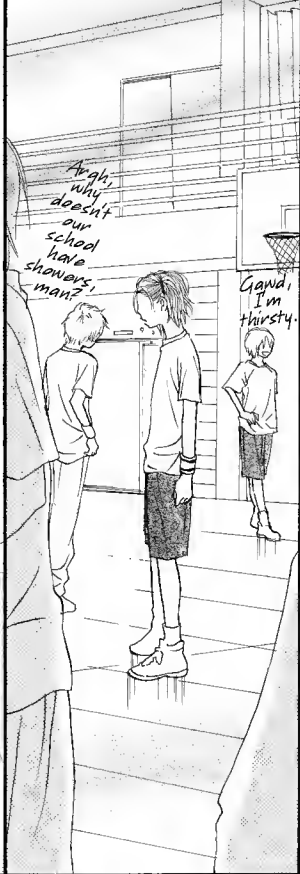


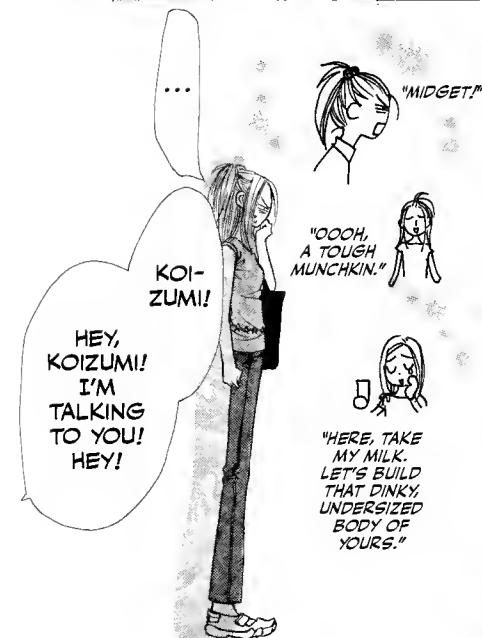
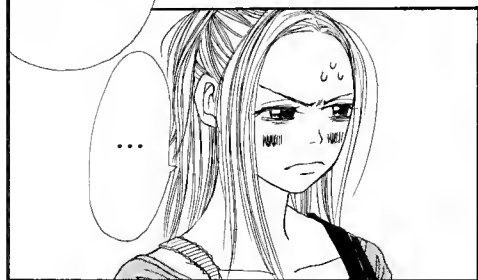
Thanks,
sir.

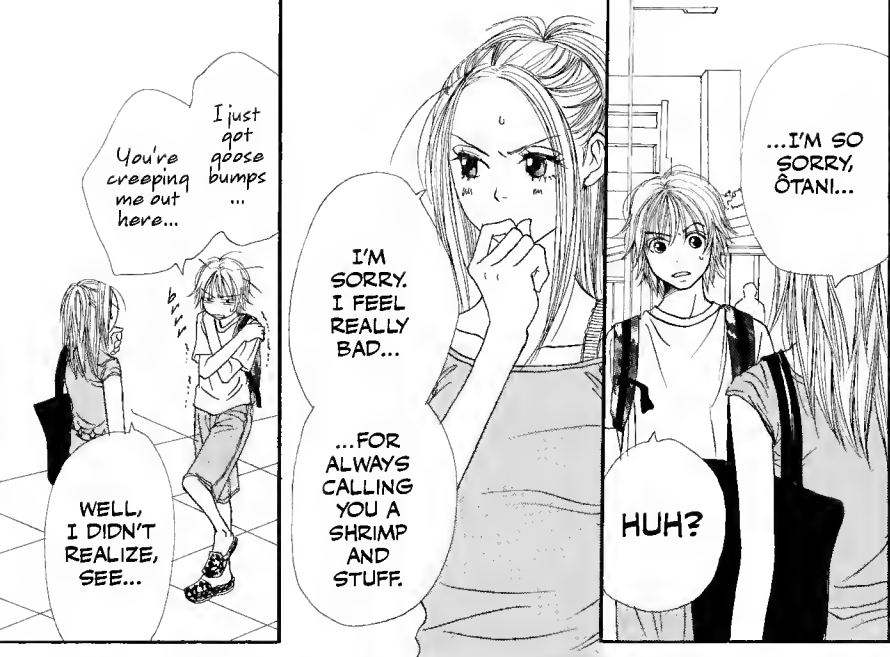
ALL
RIGHT,
KIDS,
THAT'S
ENOUGH
FOR
TODAY!



...YESSIR.







"YOU BEING
TALL AND
ME BEING
SHORT ARE
OUTSIDE
OUR
CONTROL."

"WHAT THAT
MEANS IS,
WE GOTTA
WORK ON
THE OTHER
STUFF."

MAKE HIM
THANK THE
DAY HE
WAS LUCKY
ENOUGH
TO HAVE
ME ON HIS
TEAM!

JUST
YOU
WAIT. I'M
GONNA
SHOW
HIM.

SO I'M
SHORT.
I MAKE UP
FOR IT BY
JUMPING
HIGHER,
MAN.



I
THOUGHT
YOU WERE
REALLY
COOL..

SAYS
WHO?

GOSH
DARN IT,
THOUGH.
WISH
TANAKA
HADN'T
SEEN
THAT.

TALK
ABOUT
PATHETIC
...





"HE'S
NUTS
ABOUT
HER,
THAT'S
FOR
SURE."



OH...
UM.

YEAH.

GOOD
LUCK?
FOR
WHAT?

GOING
AFTER
SUZUKI,
YOU DOPE!
SUZUKI?

Hellø?

WELL,
HEY!
GOOD
LUCK
TO YOU
TOO!

SNIK



OW!

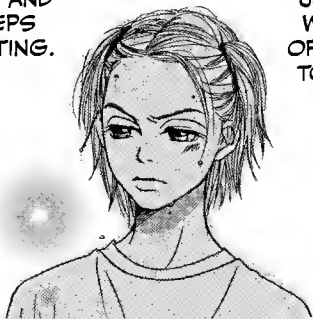
WHAAT
?!

I
CAN'T...

NAKAO AND
NOBU'RE
TRYING
TO GET
THOSE TWO
TOGETHER.

SURE,
BUT
BETTER
MAKE IT
JUST THE
FOUR
OF US.

NOT WHEN
HE TAKES
ALL OF THAT
COACH'S
FLAK AND
KEEPS
FIGHTING.



I CAN'T
SAY STUFF
LIKE "GOING
FOR IT'S
JUST A
WASTE
OF TIME"
TO HIM.

OH,
YEAH.
THAT'S
RIGHT.

NAKAO
SAID THE
SUMMER
FESTIVAL'S
COMING UP
SOON.



YOU
WANNA GO,
ALL OF US
TOGETHER?!

I BET
ÔTANI'S
HEIGHT
BOTHERS
HIM A LOT
MORE THAN
MINE EVER
BOTHERED
ME.



I BET
HE'S GONE
THROUGH A
LOT MORE
PAIN BECAUSE
OF IT THAN
I EVER DID.

AT
LEAST
THAT'S
HOW IT
SEEMED
TO ME
TODAY.



GOT
IT.

OKAY, SO
I'LL ASK
TANAKA TO
COME.

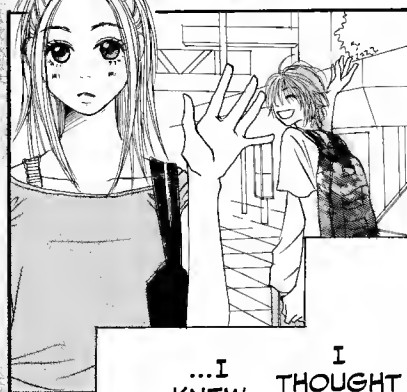
AND
YOU ASK
SUZUKI,
GOT IT?



YEAH,
BETTER
SEPA-
RATE
WHEN
WE GET
THERE.

ha
ha
ha

AND THIS
TIME,
LET'S TRY
TO STAY
FOCUSED.
NOT LIKE
THAT DAY
AT THE
POOL.



BUT
I WAS
WRONG.

...I
KNEW
HOW
ÔTANI
FEELS
BETTER
THAN
ANYONE
ELSE.

I
THOUGHT
...



BUT
THAT'S
OKAY.

TOMORROW?
SURE,
OKAY.

OH,
AND...
ÔTANI'S
COMING
TOO.
OH,
GOOD!

I GUESS
I DIDN'T
UNDER-
STAND
ÔTANI'S
FEELINGS
AT ALL.



SO
WHICH
ONE...

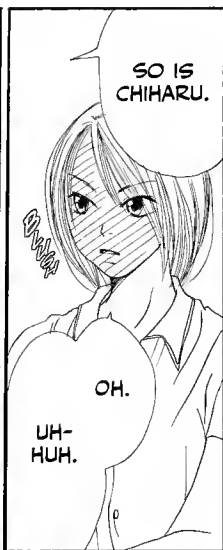
Wow,
haven't
been
to a
festival
in a
while.

...DOES
CHIHARU
LIKE
BETTER?

They're
gonna
have
fire-
works!

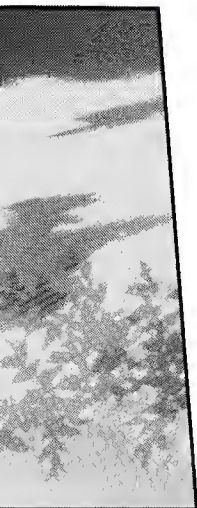


OH
DEAR...



SO IS
CHIHARU.

OH.
UH-
HUH.



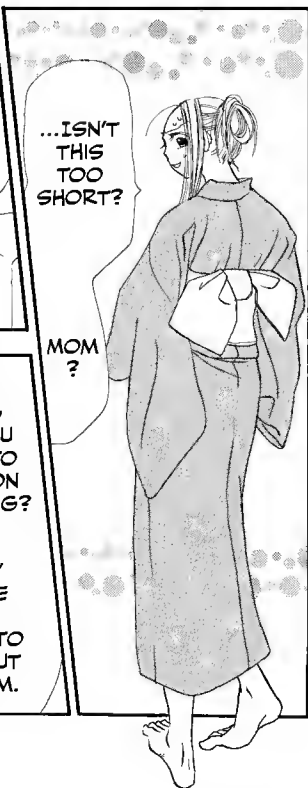
ÔTANI'S
GIVING IT
ALL HE'S
GOT.



GION

I LET
IT DOWN
AS FAR
AS IT
WOULD
GO.

I CAN'T
MAKE
IT ANY
LONGER
THAN
THAT.



...ISN'T
THIS
TOO
SHORT?

MOM
?

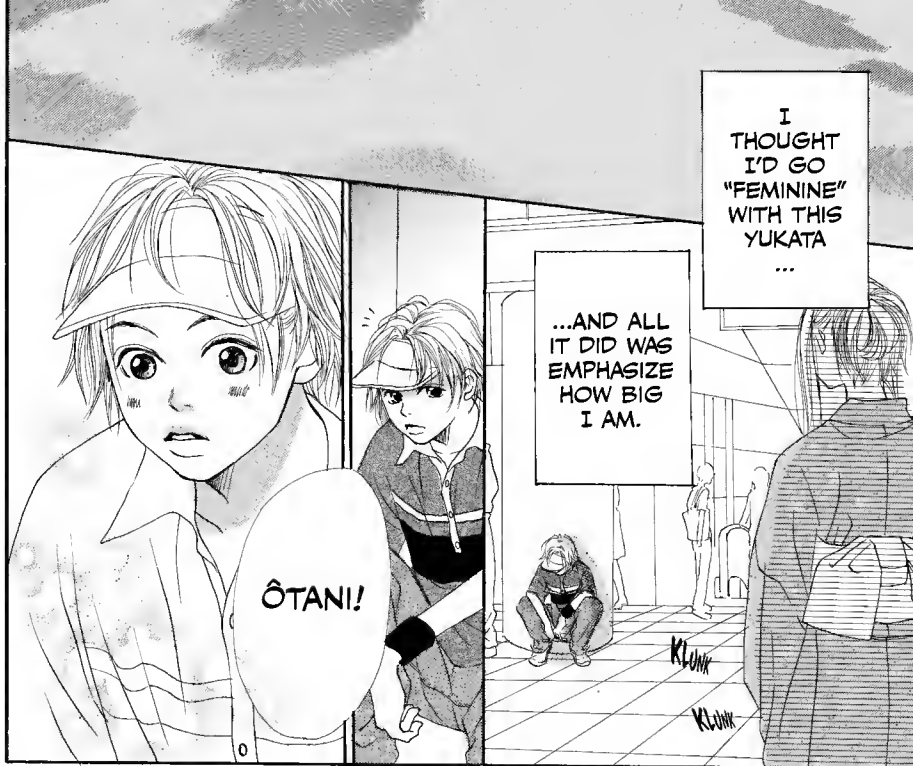
DARN
IT.

JEEZ,
MOM, IT'S
NOT LIKE I'M
GROWING
ON PURPOSE,
YOU KNOW.

It
wears
me
out.

HOW
LONG
DO YOU
PLAN TO
KEEP ON
GROWING?

EVERY
SINGLE
YEAR,
I HAVE TO
TAKE OUT
THE HEM.



I
THOUGHT
I'D GO
"FEMININE"
WITH THIS
YUKATA
...

...AND ALL
IT DID WAS
EMPHASIZE
HOW BIG
I AM.

ÔTANI!

KLUNK

KLUNK

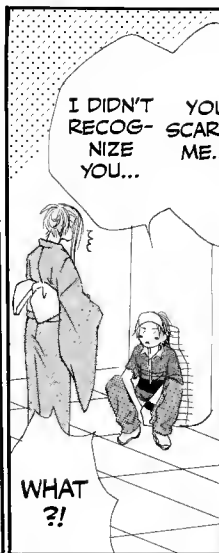


I
KNEW
IT!!

NO...

I LOOK
FUNNY?!
IS THIS
JUST
WEIRD?!

I
SHOULDN'T
HAVE
WORN
THIS!!



I DIDN'T
RECOGNIZE
YOU...

YOU
SCARED
ME...

WHAT
?!



Hoy,
waga
up

CHIHARU
AND
SUZUKI
AREN'T
HERE
YET?

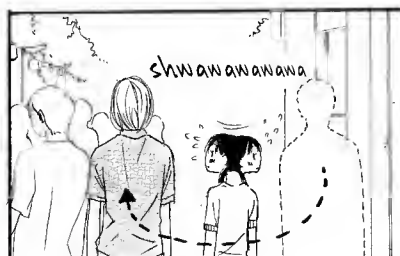
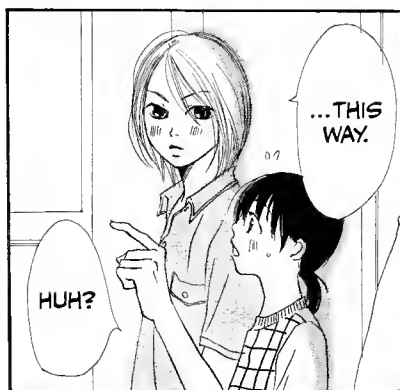
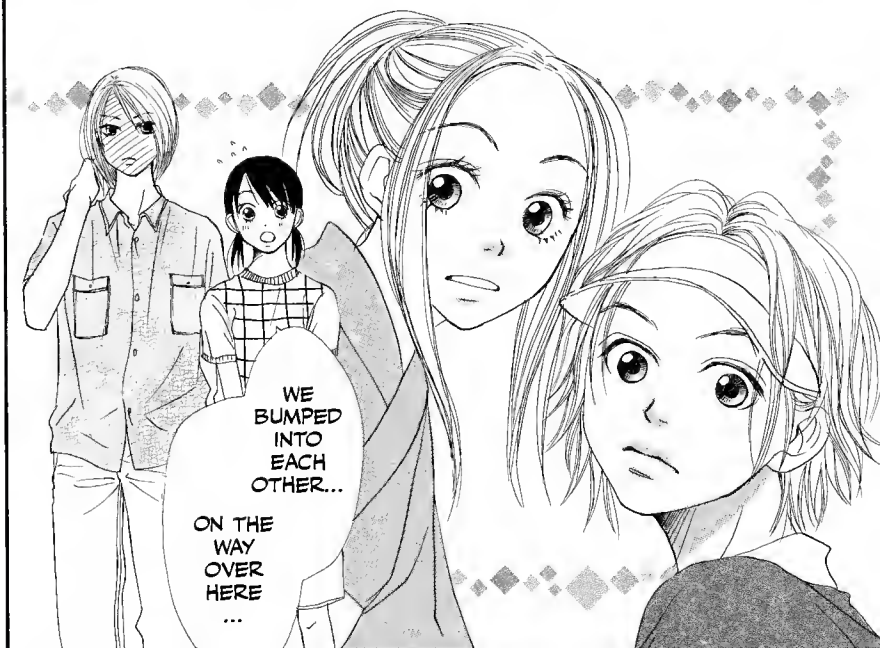
2.

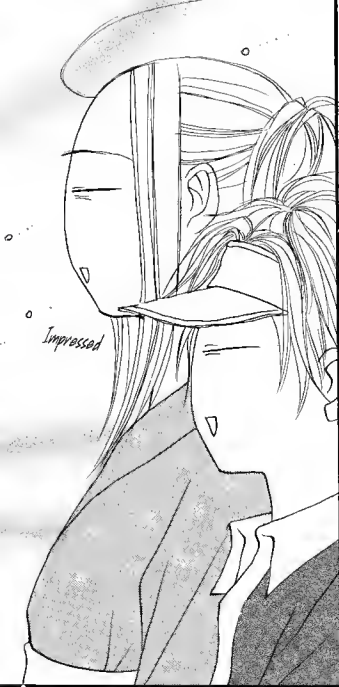
I am incredibly slow at coming up with story lines, which is a big problem. The preview cuts in *Bessatsu Margaret* have to be drawn months ahead, when nothing's been decided yet, so I generally end up lying big-time. This month's was a real whopper. There's a point when a lie gets so big you have to call it fraud. It's unbelievable. Oh!! If any of you have old copies of *Bessatsu Margaret*, please don't ever go back and look at those previews...

oh man...

Not that this has anything to do with anything, but I had never bought *Bessatsu Margaret* until I debuted as an artist... I'd always been a *Deluxe Margaret* reader. And I read *The Margaret*, too. Buying a copy every month can be pretty hard work... Oh! But please do!! There's lots of way better manga than this one inside!? Hey, don't put yourself down like that... Come on, gotta go for it... Okay, I'll try harder from now on...







HE SWITCHED SIDES WITH HER SO SHE WOULDN'T HAVE PEOPLE BUMPING INTO HER ANYMORE.

BUT ALSO PRETTY DARN SLICK!
THAT WAS PRETTY CRYPTIC!

YEAH.



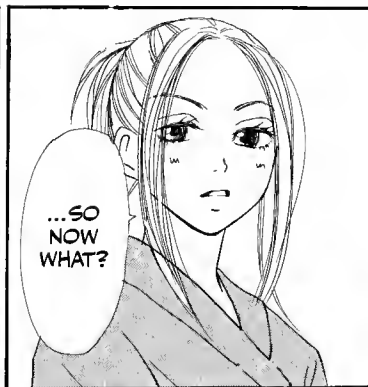
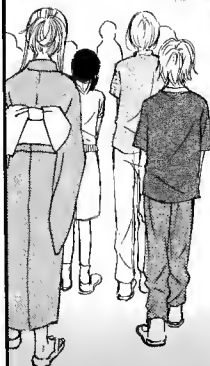
OH...



YOU'RE RIGHT.

ACTUALLY, THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE ALREADY TOGETHER, BUT IT'S THEIR FIRST DATE.

THOSE TWO'RE LOOKING REALLY GOOD, LIKE, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME.



...SO NOW WHAT?



WHADDAYA MEAN?

I
COULDN'T
GET IN
THERE
IN A
MILLION
YEARS.

LOOK
AT
THEM.

...IT'S
HOPE-
LESS,
AFTER
ALL.

THERE'S
NO
POINT
GOING
AFTER
HIM.

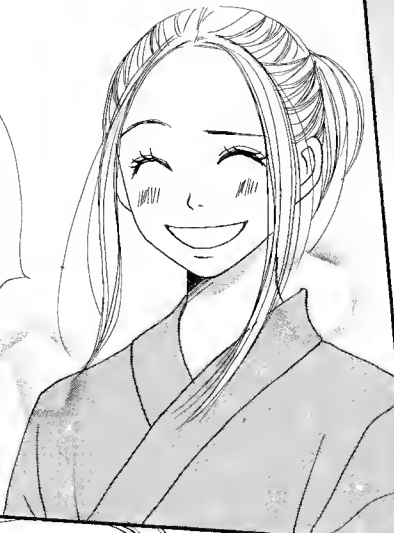
HM?

FORGET
ABOUT
SUZUKI.

WHAT?

I
QUIT.

...ÔTANI.



AND WHO
WANTS TO
BUST IN AND
GET IN THEIR
WAY WHEN
THOSE TWO'RE
LOOKING SO
GOOD?!



THERE'S
NO WAY
I'M GONNA
GET HIM.

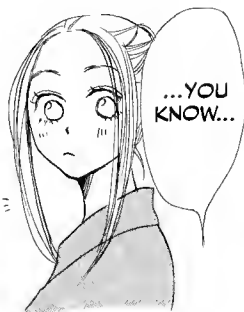
BUT...



...KOIZUMI
...

THAT'S
IT.

I'M
GIVING
UP ON
HIM.



...YOU
KNOW...

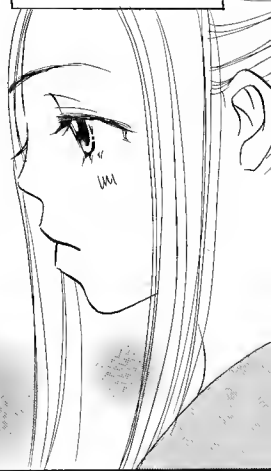


TANAKA?

WHENEVER
SHE'S
TALKING
TO ME,
SHE KEEPS
GLANCING
OVER AT
SUZUKI ALL
THE TIME.



NOT
THAT
HE WAS
EVER
INTERESTED
IN ME IN
THE FIRST
PLACE.



KOIZUMI.

HUH...

PRETTY
DARN
RUDE,
HUH?

YUP.

REALLY?

WHAT?





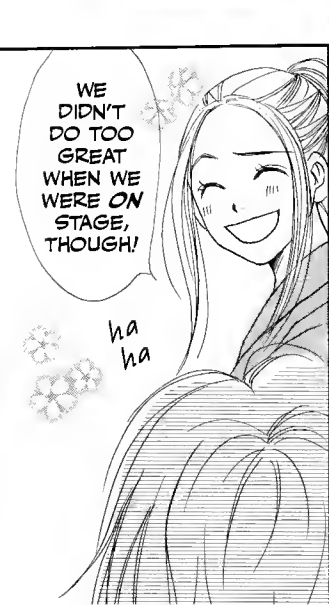
THAT
OKAY
WITH
YOU?



DON'T
WANNA
BUST
IN AND
GET IN
THEIR
WAY.



MAYBE WE
OUGHTA
JUST LEAVE
THOSE TWO
ALONE
TOGETHER.



WE
DIDN'T
DO TOO
GREAT
WHEN WE
WERE ON
STAGE,
THOUGH!

ha
ha



THAT
WAS
QUICK.

"OKAY,
WE'RE
OUTTA
HERE!
THANK
YOU
VERY
MUCH!!"

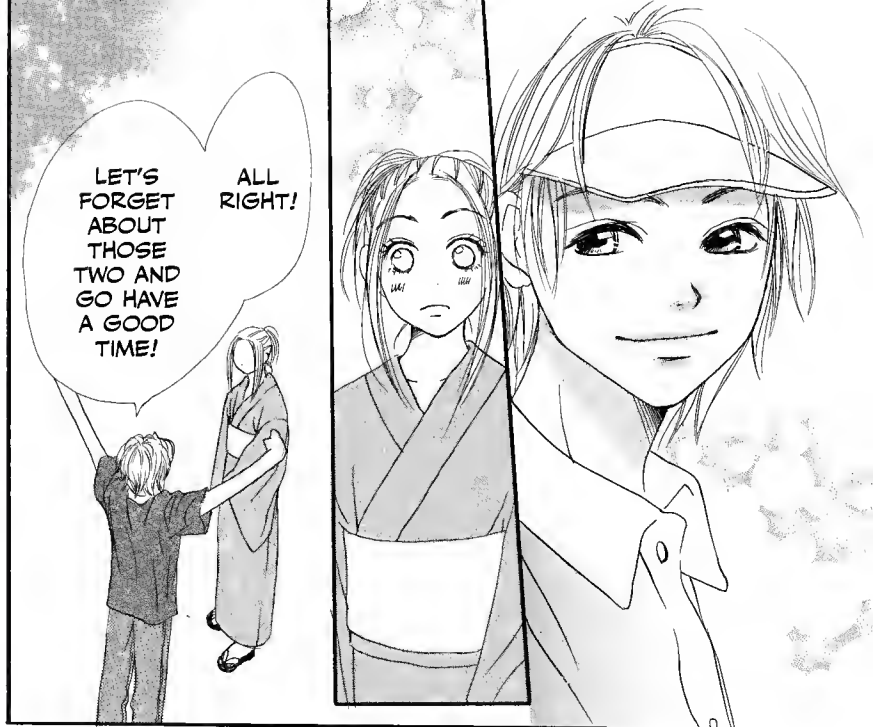
COMEDIANS
GOTTA
KNOW
WHEN TO
LEAVE THE
STAGE!



YEAH.
FACT,
I WISH
THEY'D
HURRY
UP AND
GET
TOGETHER!

YOU
SURE?

MAKE
ME FEEL
A LOT
BETTER!



THANK
YOU,
ÔTANI.

YEAH!

8.

I'm writing this at the beginning of February... and my nail, which split right down the middle on New Year's Eve, with half of it falling off, has finally grown back.

.....

Oh my!! What is wrong with this person?! Is she trying to gross us out with this awful, painful-sounding story?!



Speaking of painful stories, once when I was working at a bakery, I was slicing bread with the slicing machine when my finger...

Gyaaaaaaaaah!!

What am I, stupid?! It's starting to hurt just from writing about it!! Gyaaaaaaaaah!!

Oh man...

Be very careful with your fingers, please.





CUZ IF I'D
BEEN ALONE,
I THINK I'D
HAVE GOTTEN
REALLY
DEPRESSED.



Goldfish Scoop

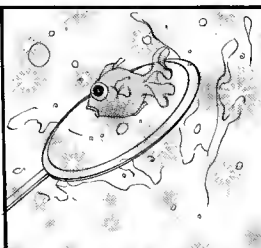
LET'S
START OUT
SCOOPING
GOLDFISH!

WOW!

YAY!

LOOK AT
ALL THE
STANDS!

YEAH,
YEAH!



Ya
dope!

THE GUY
I LIKE
IS WITH
SOMEONE
ELSE, BUT
I'M HAVING
A GOOD
TIME.





THIS
IS SO
FUN!

IT'S
BECAUSE
ÔTANI'S
WITH ME.

I
KNOW,
HUH?

ha
ha!

IT'S LIKE,
WHAT DID
WE COME
HERE FOR
AGAIN?

YEAH.
DON'T
YOU?

YOU
THINK THE
OTHER
TWO WENT
HOME
ALREADY?

...HE'S
RIGHT.

WHAT
DID WE
COME
HERE
FOR?

I MEAN,
WHO SPENDS
HOURS
AND HOURS
AT FESTIVAL
STALLS EXCEPT
LITTLE KIDS
AND US?



...HIS
HANDS
ARE
TOTALLY
A GUY'S
HANDS.

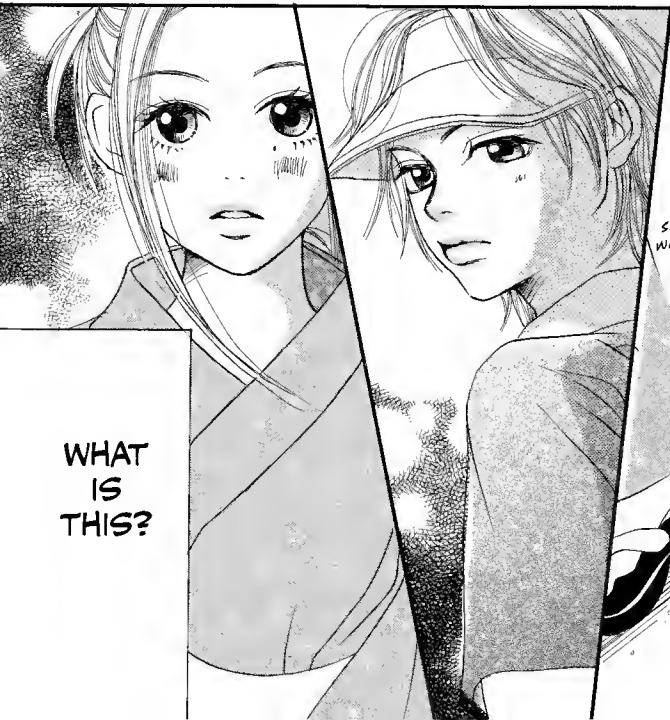
HE'S
SHRIMPY,
BUT...

ALL
KINDA
BONY...

WHADJA
SAY?!

YOU
KNOW,
YOU'RE
SHRIMPY,
BUT...

NOTHING
...

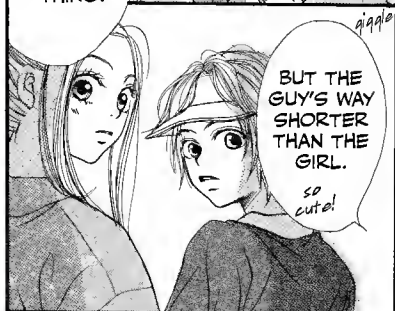


WHAT
IS
THIS?

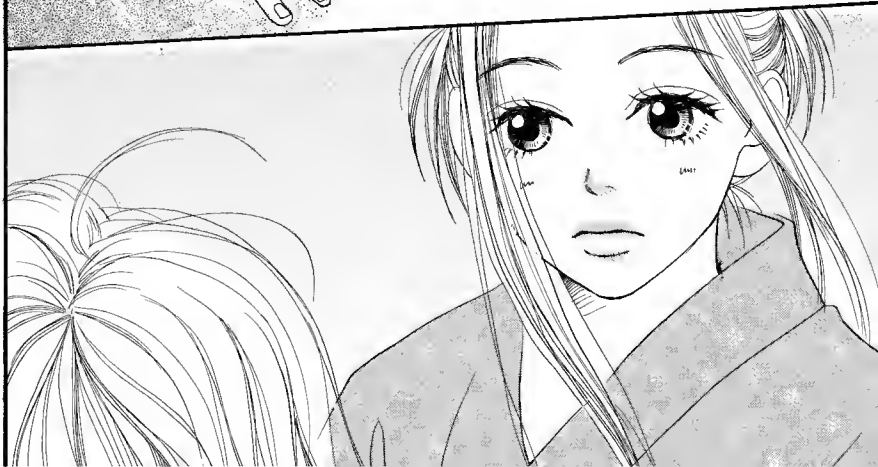
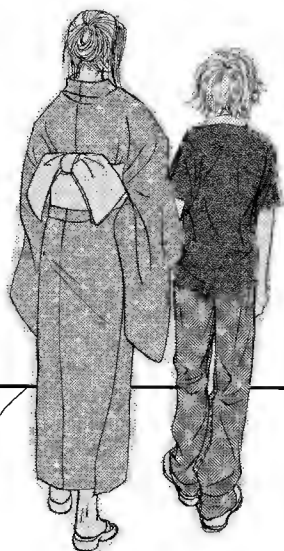
HE'D
KILL
ME IF
I SAID
THAT
TO HIM.

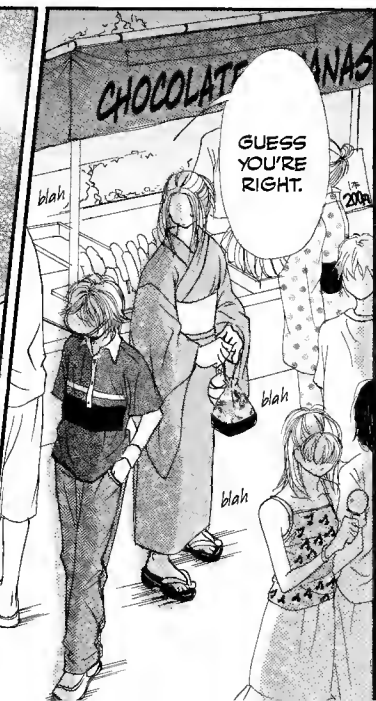
SO I
WONT.

Klak



THIS IS
THROWING
ME WAY
OFF,
OKAY?





IT'S...

...KINDA
WEIRD

...

...YEAH.

WANNA
GO
HOME?

...

IT
FEELS
WEIRD.

...WHAT
IS
THIS?

with
the
funny
jingle.

THAT
ONE
ON
TV?

BIG
SALAD
WITH
KOREAN
DRESS-
ING.

WHAD-
JA
HAVE?

YEAH,
THAT
ONE.

the
guy
with
the
perm.



...HUH.

...WAS IT
GOOD?

...
YEAH.



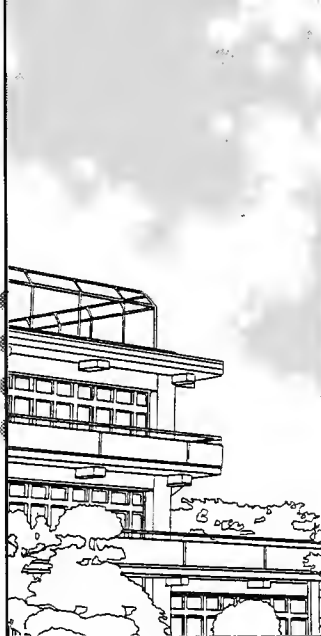
HEH?

BUT
WE'RE
THE
ONES
WHO DIS-
APPEARED
ON YOU...

NO,
THAT'S
NOT
WHAT I
MEANT!



RISA,
I'M SO
SORRY!



WHAT'S
SHE
TALKING
ABOUT?

UM...
I THINK
THERE'S
BEEN
SOME
KIND OF
MISUNDER
...

AND
GUESS
WHAT?!



SUZUKI-
KUN
TOLD
ME...

...THAT
ÔTANI'S
TOTALLY
CRAZY
ABOUT
YOU,
TOO!!



NEXT
TIME I
WON'T
COME
ALONG,
OKAY?
EVEN IF
YOU ASK
ME!

**HUNH
?!**

OKAY?!

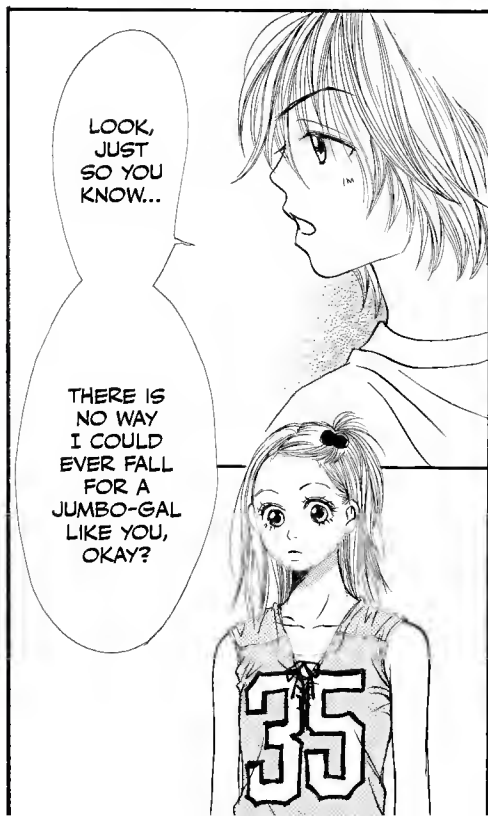
YOU
SHOULD
JUST
GO WITH
ÔTANI!

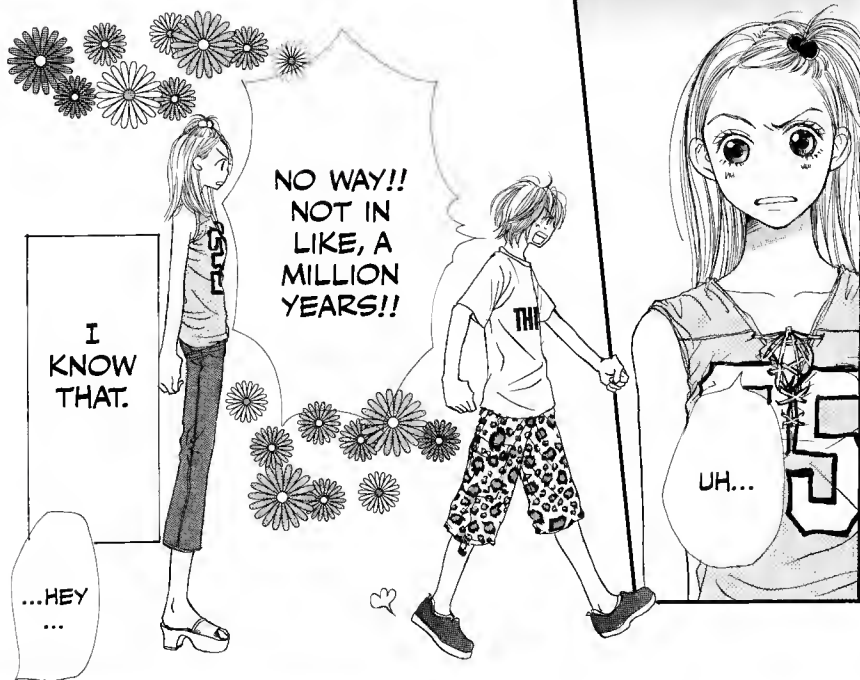


SUZUKI-
KUN AND
I WERE
TOTALLY IN
YOUR WAY,
WEREN'T
WE?!

**HUH
...?!**

I KNOW THAT
YOU'RE TOTALLY
CRAZY ABOUT
ÔTANI AND STUFF,
SO I SHOULDN'T
EVEN HAVE
TAGGED ALONG!





I
KNOW
THAT,
OKAY?

WELL,
GOOD,
CUZ I SURE
DON'T WANT
A MIDGET
LIKE YOU!!



SO
ANYWAY...

...THE
SUMMER
OF LOVE
I'D BEEN
HOPING
TO HAVE...

...ENDED
BEFORE
IT EVEN
STARTED.

blah

PASS
YOUR
SUMMER
HOME-
WORK UP
TO THE
FRONT,
PLEASE.

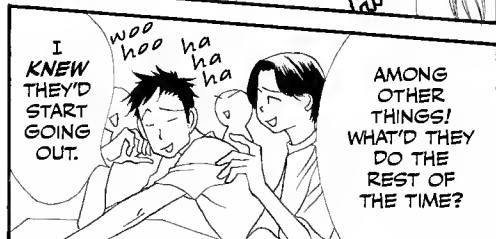
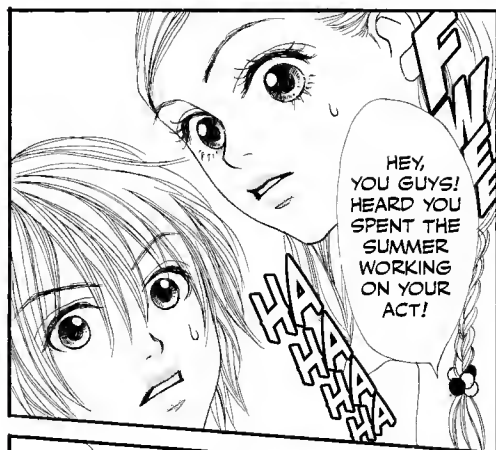
blah

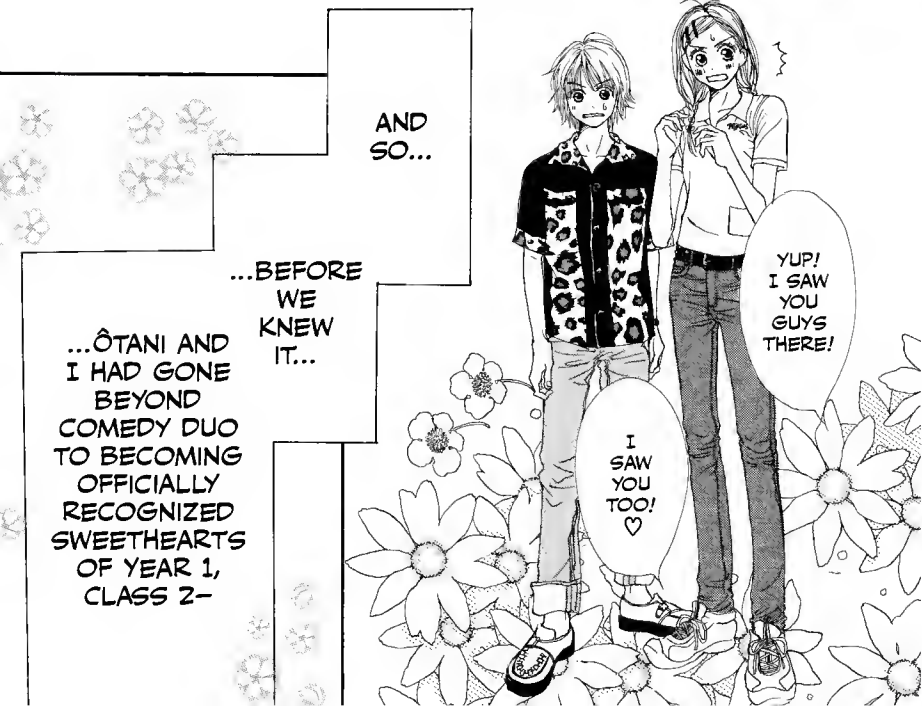
AND
IF YOU
DIDN'T
DO IT,
STEP
UP TO MY
DESK AND
COME
CLEAN.

ha
ha
ha



CHAPTER 3



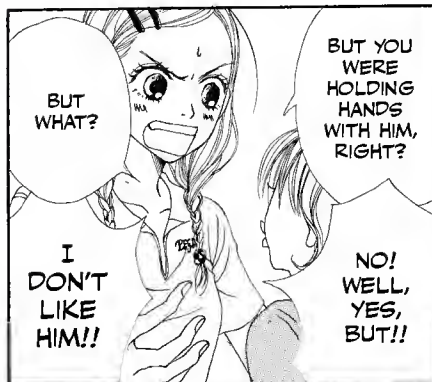




I
DON'T
LIKE
HIM!!

I'M SO
SURE!

YOU
COULD'VE
TOLD US
YOU LIKED
ÔTANI!
INSTEAD OF
PRETENDING
YOU *DIDN'T*
ALL THE
TIME!



BUT
WHAT?

I
DON'T
LIKE
HIM!!

BUT YOU
WERE
HOLDING
HANDS
WITH HIM,
RIGHT?

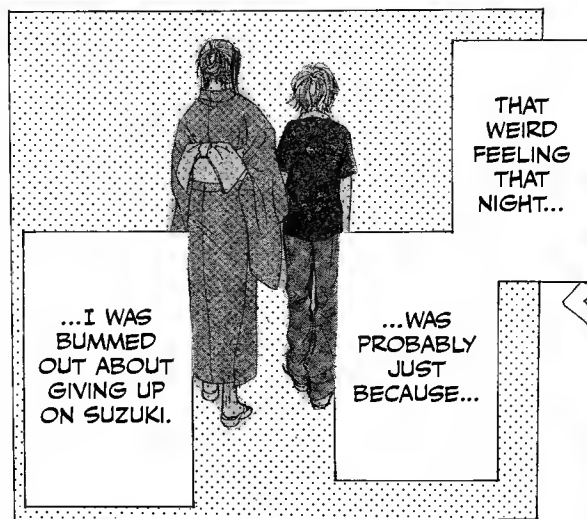
NO!
WELL,
YES,
BUT!!



-BUT
HEY...

NOBODY
ASKED
US!!

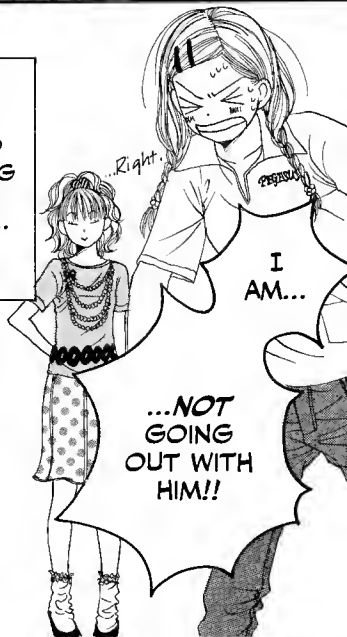
OH,
REALLY...



...I WAS
BUMMED
OUT ABOUT
GIVING UP
ON SUZUKI.

...WAS
PROBABLY
JUST
BECAUSE...

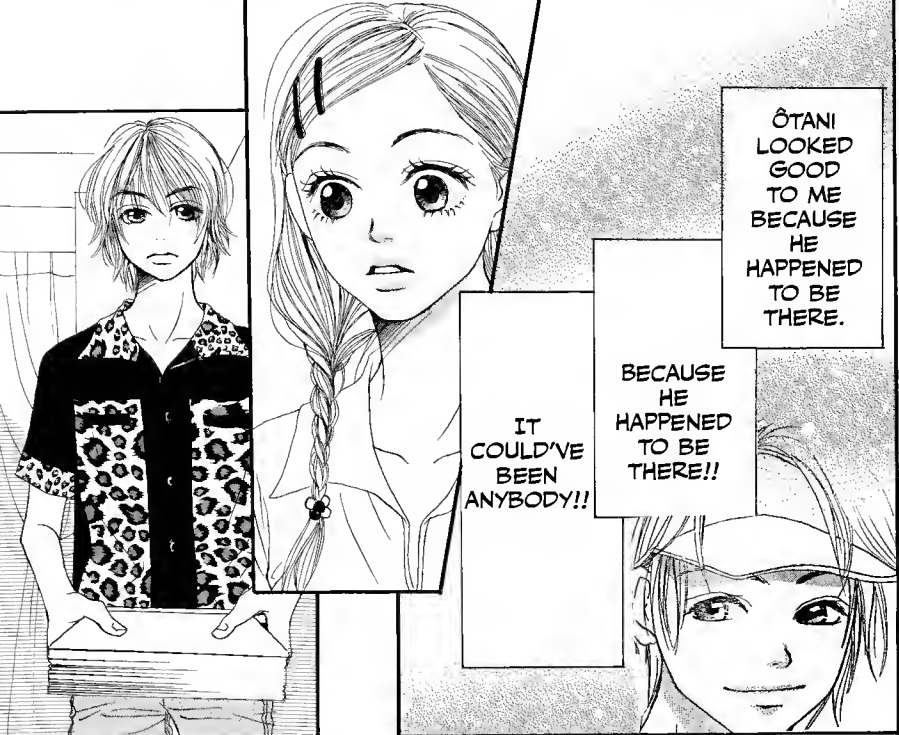
THAT
WEIRD
FEELING
THAT
NIGHT...



Right.

I
AM...

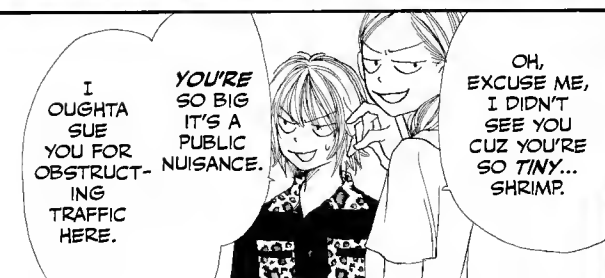
...NOT
GOING
OUT WITH
HIM!!



ÔTANI
LOOKED
GOOD
TO ME
BECAUSE
HE
HAPPENED
TO BE
THERE.

IT
COULD'VE
BEEN
ANYBODY!!

BECAUSE
HE
HAPPENED
TO BE
THERE!!



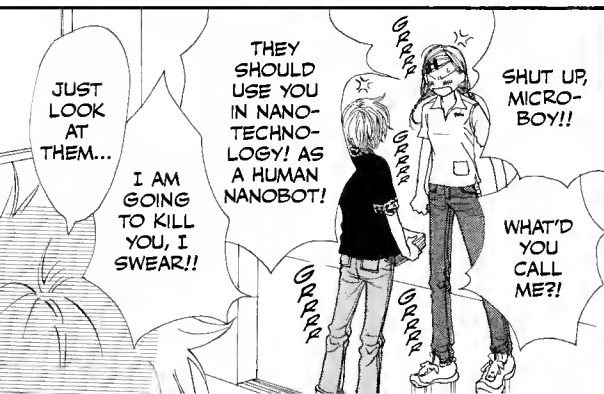
I
OUGHTA
SUE
YOU FOR
OBSTRUCT-
ING
TRAFFIC
HERE.

YOU'RE
SO BIG
IT'S A
PUBLIC
NUISANCE.

OH,
EXCUSE ME,
I DIDN'T
SEE YOU
CUZ YOU'RE
SO TINY...
SHRIMP.



...
MOVE,
JUMBO-
GAL.



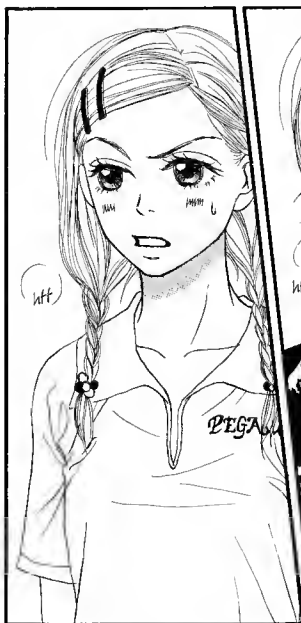
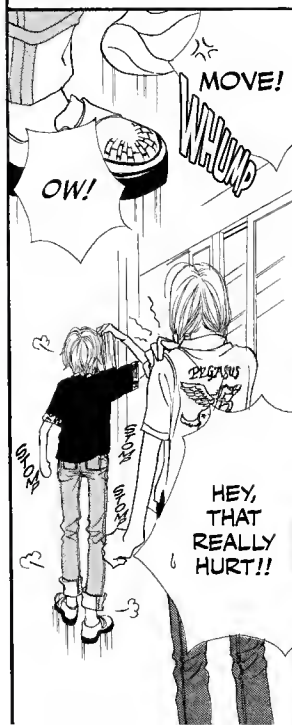
JUST
LOOK
AT THEM...

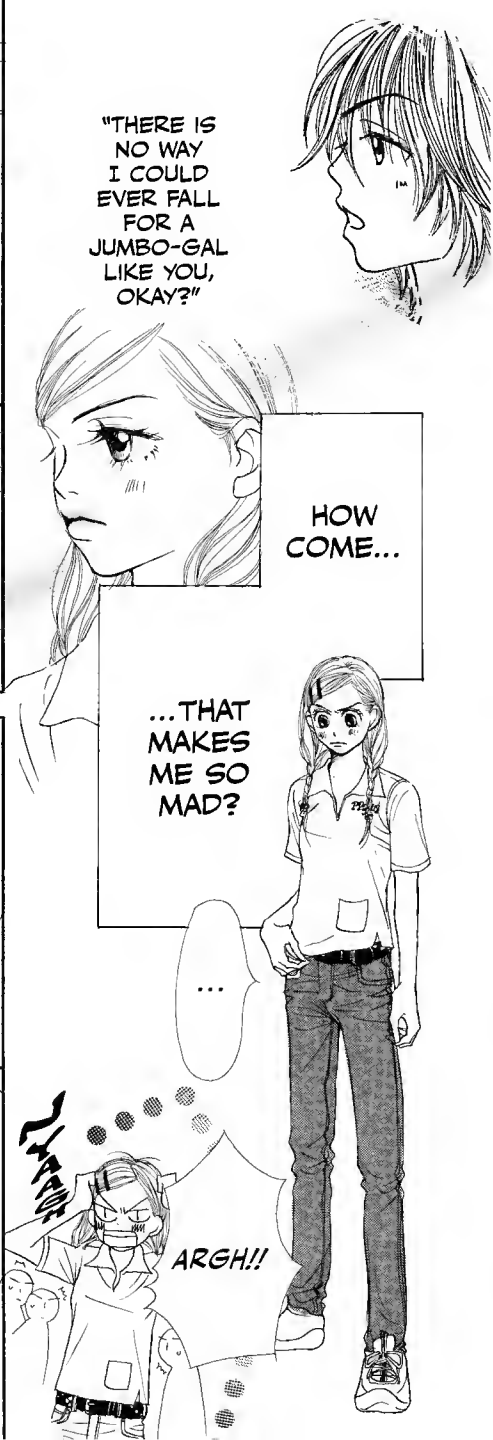
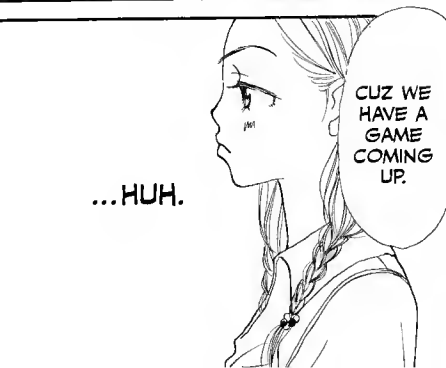
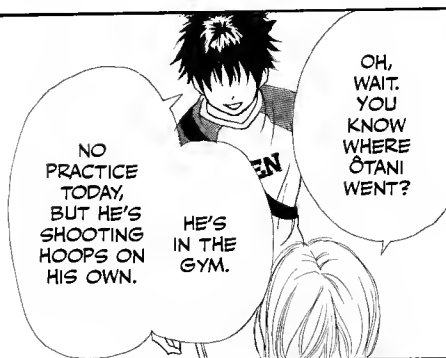
I AM
GOING
TO KILL
YOU, I
SWEAR!!

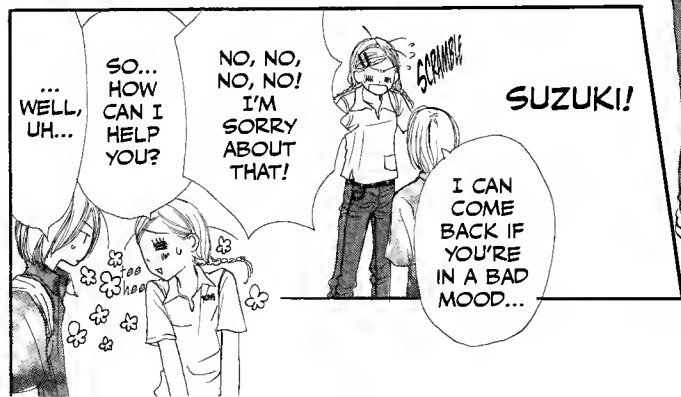
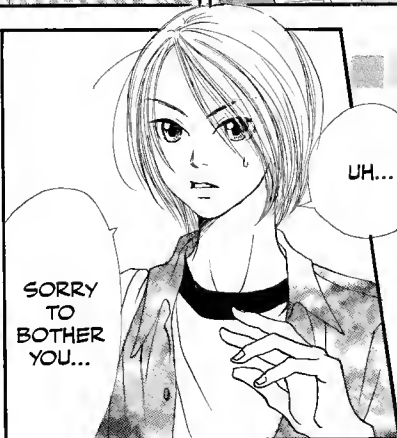
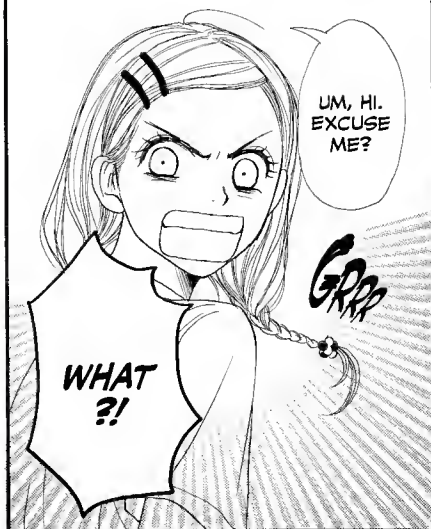
THEY
SHOULD
USE YOU
IN NANO-
TECHNO-
LOGY! AS
A HUMAN
NANOBOT!

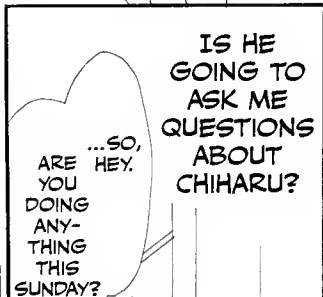
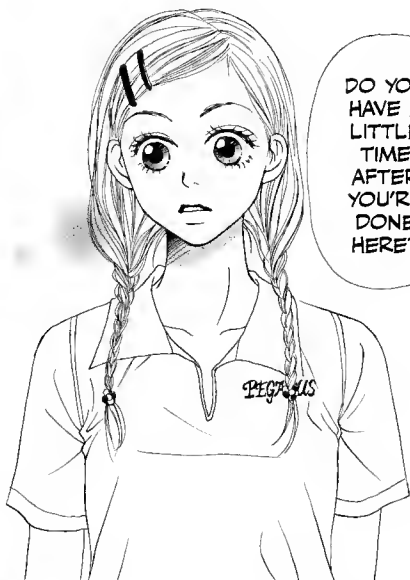
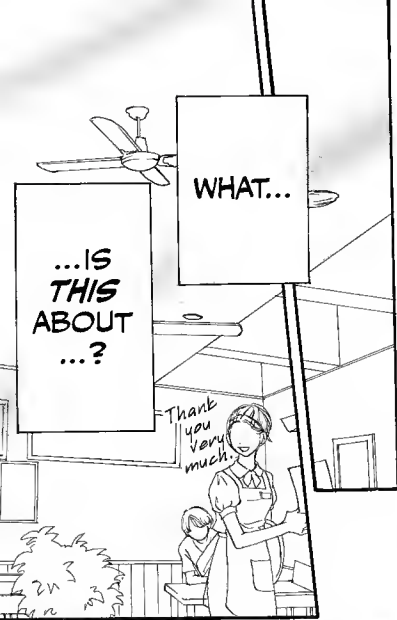
SHUT UP,
MICRO-
BOY!!

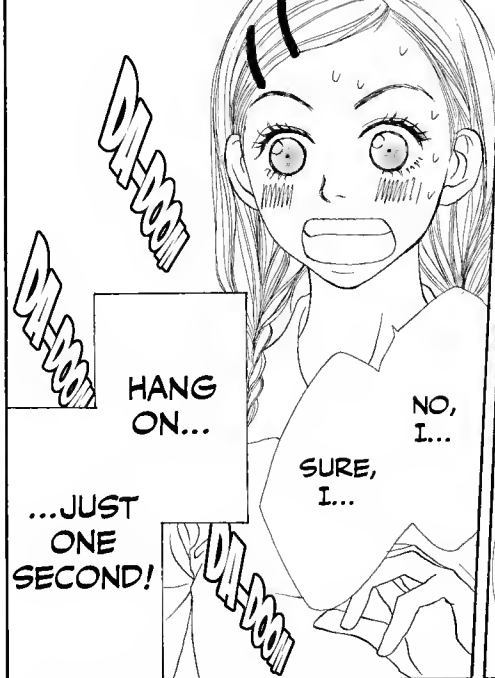
WHAT'D
YOU
CALL
ME?!









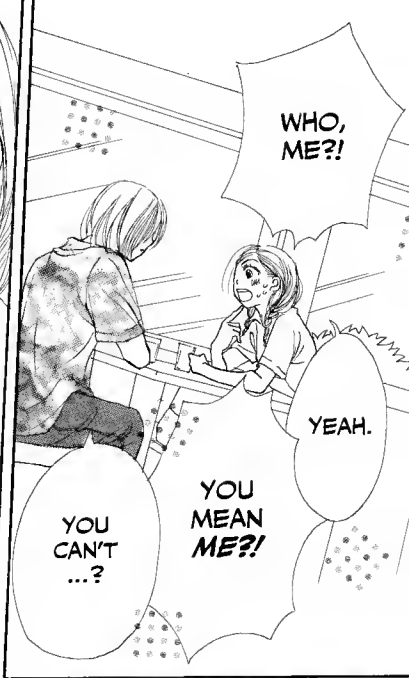


...JUST
ONE
SECOND!

HANG
ON...

SURE,
I...

NO,
I...

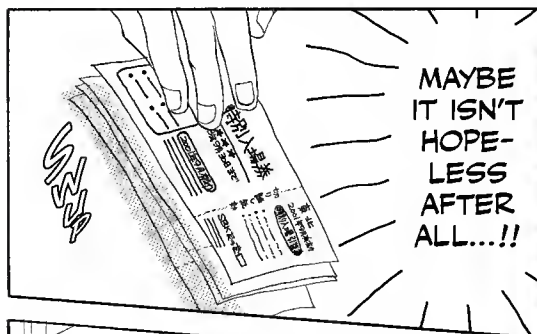


WHO,
ME?!

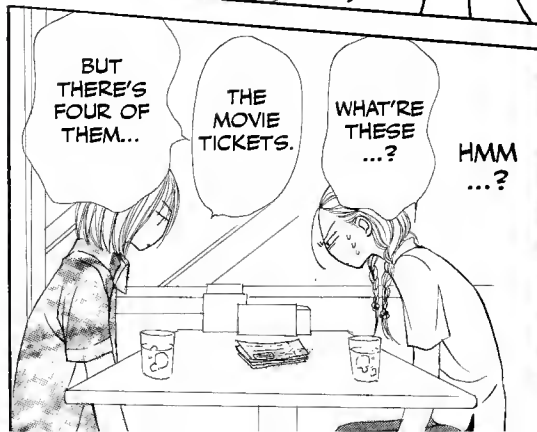
YEAH.

YOU
CAN'T
...?

YOU
MEAN
ME?!



MAYBE
IT ISN'T
HOPE-
LESS
AFTER
ALL...!!

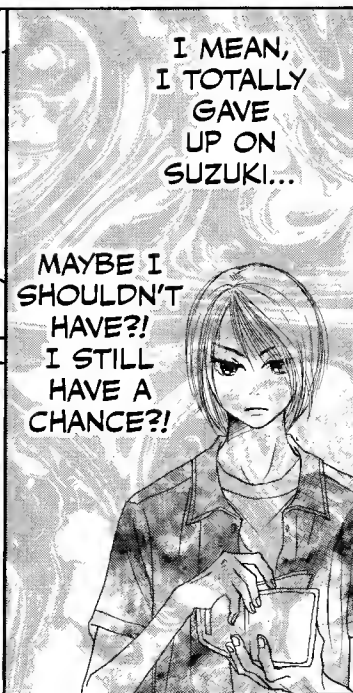


BUT
THERE'S
FOUR OF
THEM...

THE
MOVIE
TICKETS.

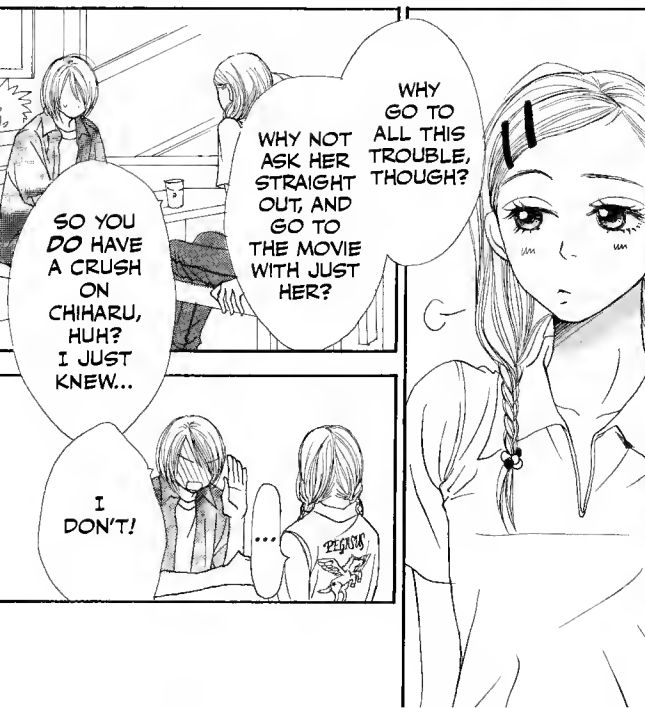
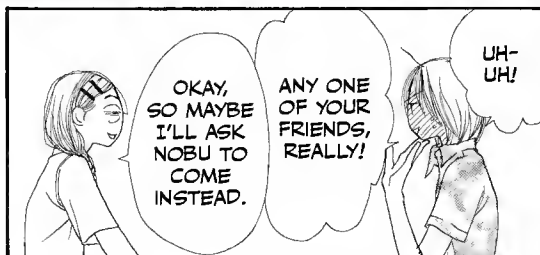
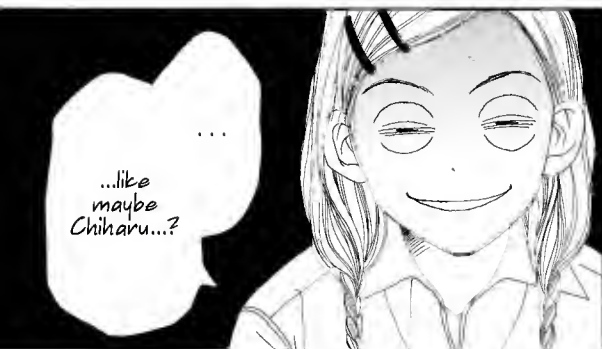
WHAT'RE
THESE
...?

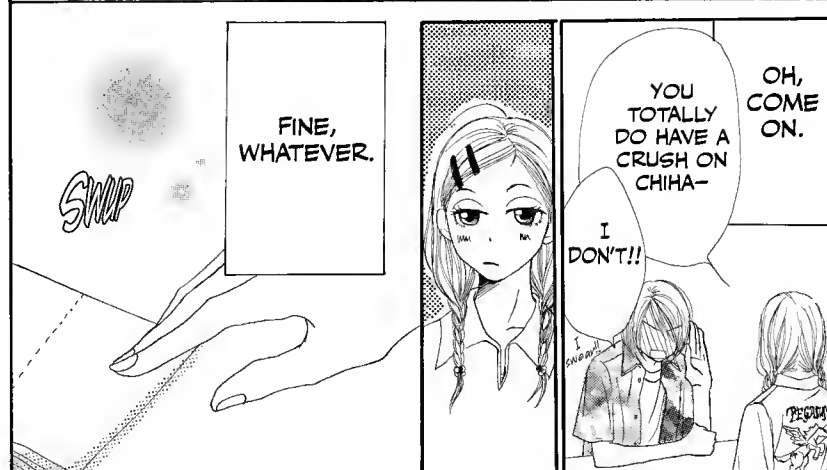
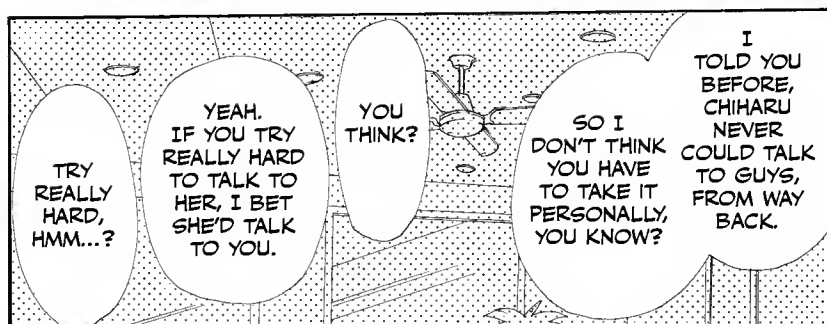
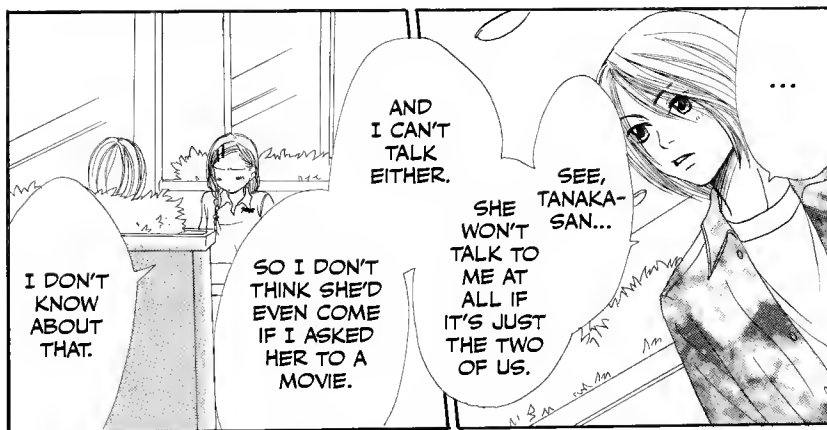
HMM
...?

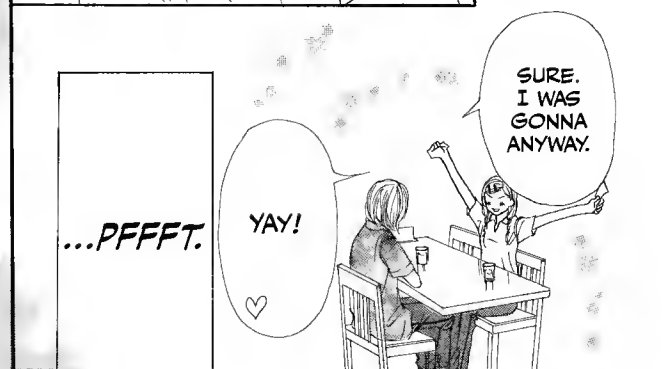
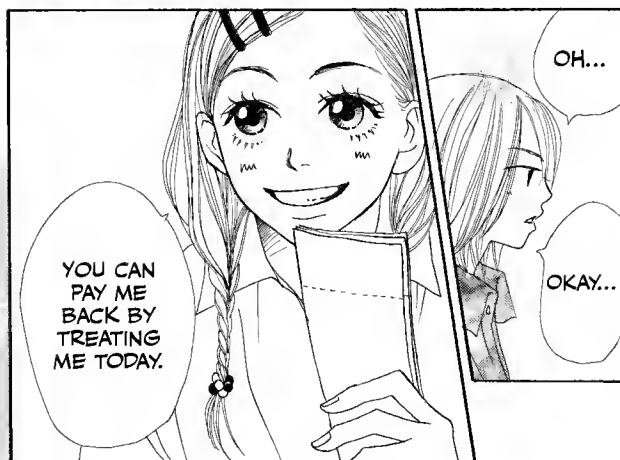


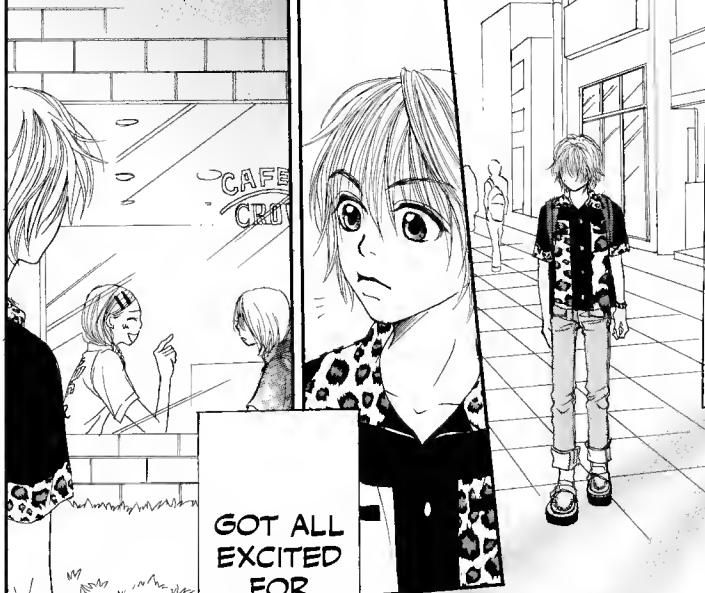
I MEAN,
I TOTALLY
GAVE
UP ON
SUZUKI...

MAYBE I
SHOULDN'T
HAVE?!
I STILL
HAVE A
CHANCE?!









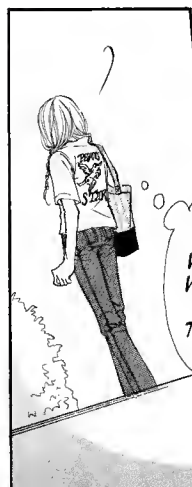
SILLY
ME.

GOT ALL
EXCITED
FOR
NOTHING.



SO
I'LL
CALL
YOU!

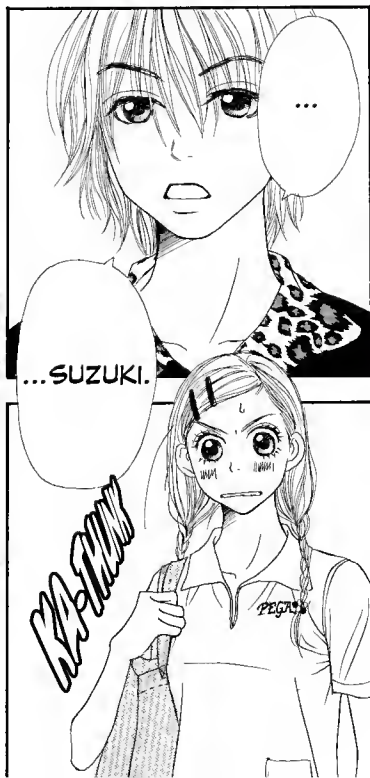
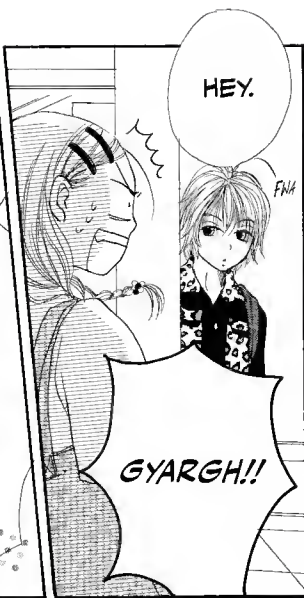
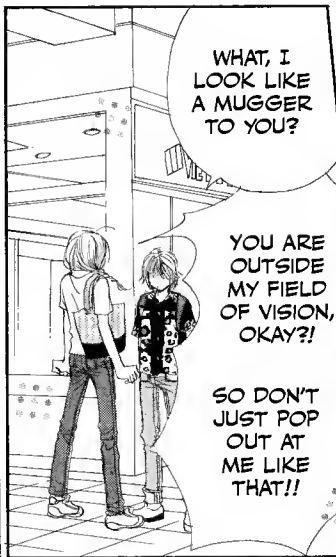
YEAH.

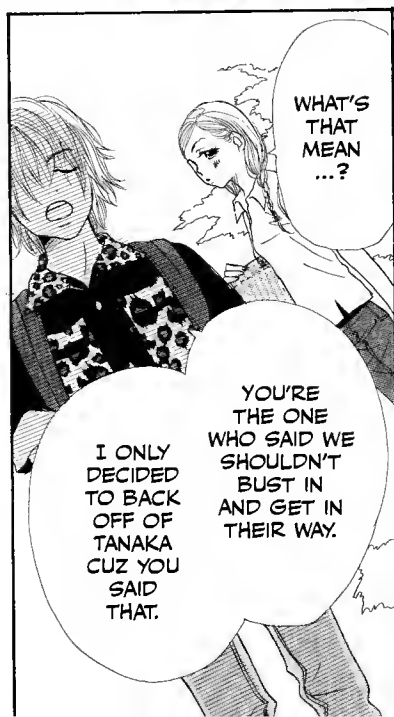
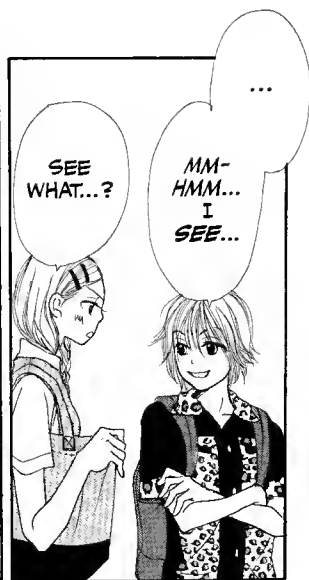
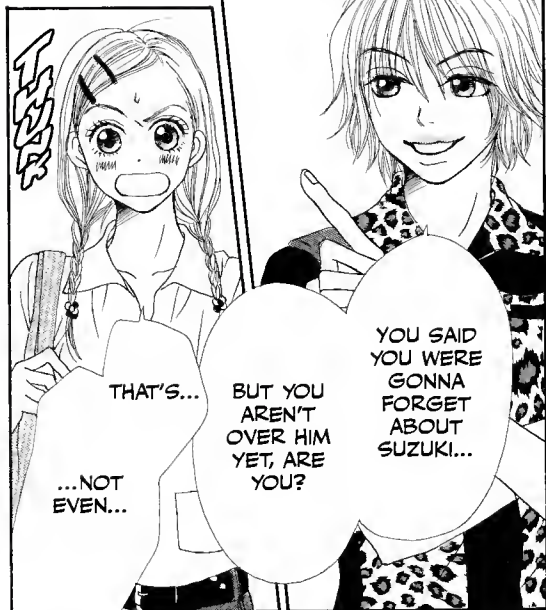


THAT
WAS A
WASTE
OF
TIME...

I AM
SUCH
AN
IDIOT.







NO WAY,
DOPEY.
I'M NOT
A WISHY-
WASHY
LOSER
LIKE YOU.

WHEN
I SAY
I'M OUTTA
THERE,
I'M OUTTA
THERE.
I'M A REAL
MANLY KINDA
GUY, ALL
RIGHT?

SO
ACTUALLY
YOU STILL
HAVE A
CRUSH...
ON HER...?

REALLY?

YEAH.

SO I'M
THE ONLY
WISHY-
WASHY
LOSER
AROUND
HERE.

JEEZ,
I'M
HOPE-
LESS.

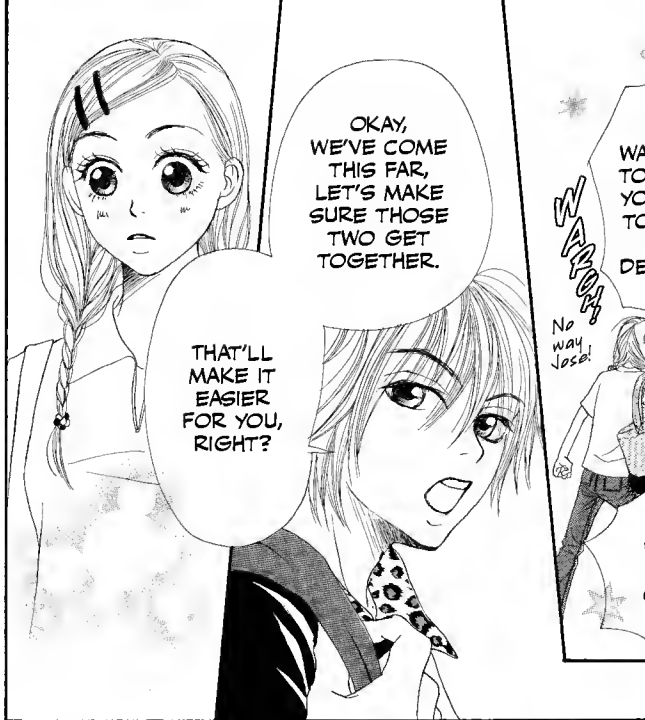
ALL
TALK,
NO
WALK.

I
COULD'VE
TOLD YOU
THAT WAY
BACK.

THAT
SOME-
THING
PEOPLE
SAY
ABOUT
THEM-
SELVES?

A
MANLY
KINDA
GUY
...?

I
GOTTA,
CUZ
NOBODY
ELSE
SAYS IT.



OKAY,
WE'VE COME
THIS FAR,
LET'S MAKE
SURE THOSE
TWO GET
TOGETHER.

THAT'LL
MAKE IT
EASIER
FOR YOU,
RIGHT?

Wah!

No way,
Jose!

YOU
WANT ME
TO SOCK
YOU ONE
TO HELP
YOU
DECIDE?!

SO
WHICH
IS IT?!
YOU
GIVING
UP ON
HIM OR
NOT?!

WAY
TO
GO!

I'M
GIVING
UP ON
HIM. I
ALREADY
HAVE!



SO IS
HE NICE,
OR IS
HE A
JERK?

IT
SEEMS
LIKE...

...ÔTANI'S
ALWAYS
COMING
TO MY
RESCUE.

HE'S
HARD
TO
FIGURE
OUT.

FINE.
I'LL
HELP
YOU OUT,
THEN.

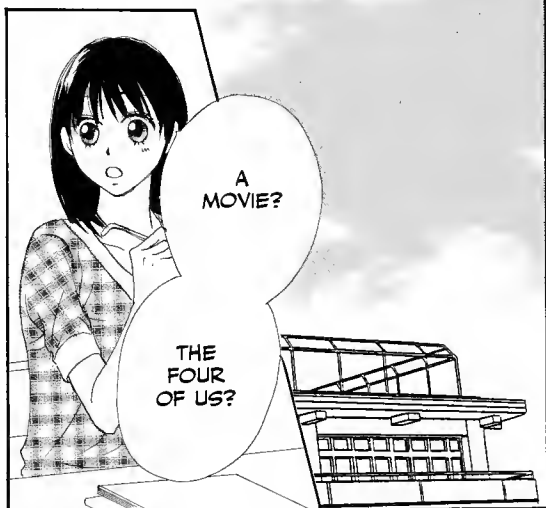
YEAH...



NO! I
DON'T
KNOW
WHERE
YOU
GOT
THAT.

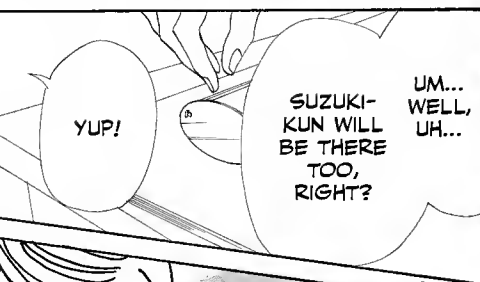
WOULDN'T
YOU
RATHER
GO WITH
JUST
ÔTANI?
BUT...

I'M NOT
GOING
OUT WITH
ÔTANI, OKAY?
AND I
DON'T HAVE
A CRUSH
ON HIM,
EITHER!



A
MOVIE?

THE
FOUR
OF US?



YUP!

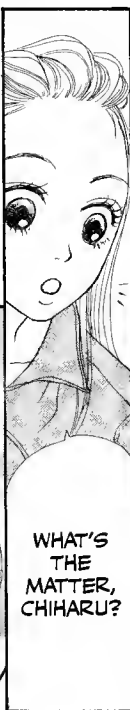
SUZUKI-
KUN WILL
BE THERE
TOO,
RIGHT?

UM...
WELL,
UH...

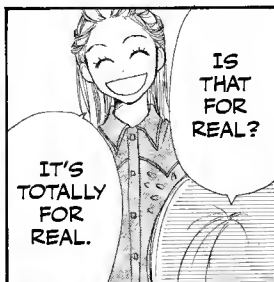


MURF

...



WHAT'S
THE
MATTER,
CHIHARU?



IS
THAT
FOR
REAL?

IT'S
TOTALLY
FOR
REAL.

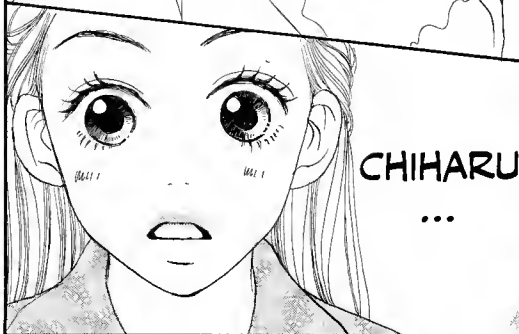


OH.
OKAY...



WHEN I'M
WITH HIM,
I GET SO
NERVOUS...

...THAT
I CAN'T
THINK OF
ANYTHING
TO SAY!



CHIHARU

...



WH-WH-
WHAT'S
THE
MATTER,
CHIHARU?!

WHAAAT
??!

...I
CAN'T
TALK
TO
HIM.

Huster

Huster

HUH?!



OH,
NOTHING!

DON'T
WORRY,
CHIHARU.
I'LL TAKE
CARE OF
THIS FOR
YOU!

YOU WIN,
I LOSE.
HE'S
YOURS...

THAT'S
IT...

HUH?



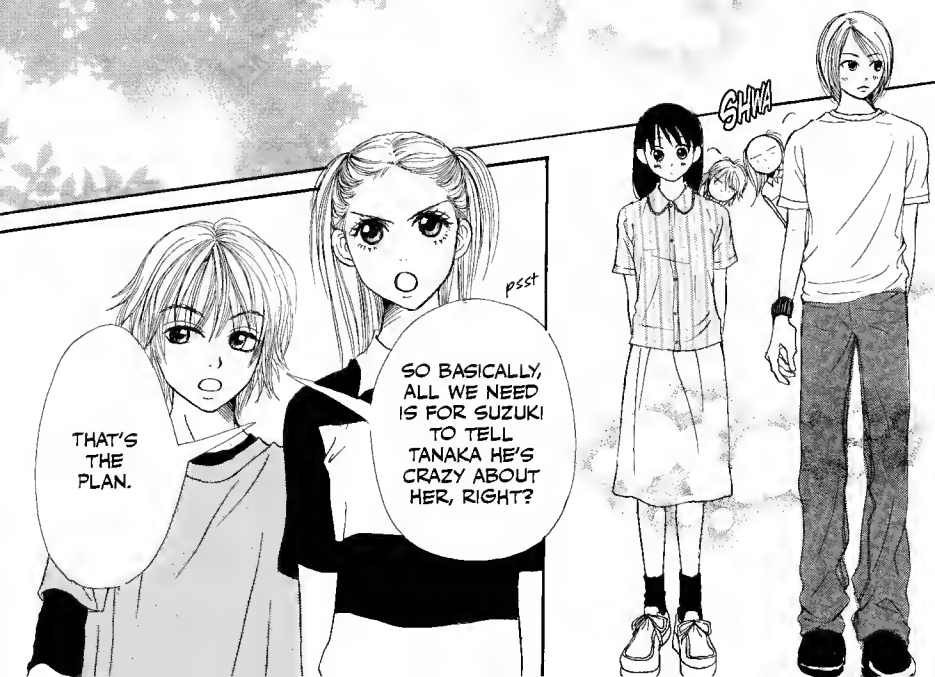
What?
Who's in
love?

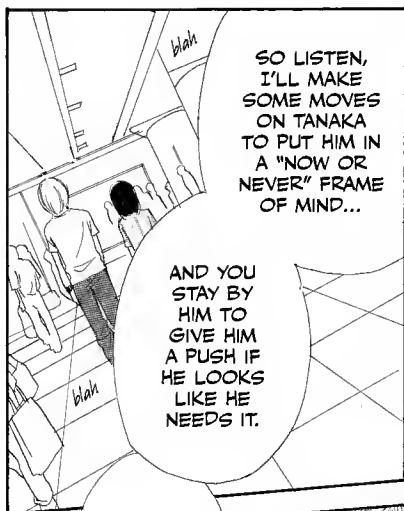
THAT'S
LOVE,
CHIHARU!!

BUT,
RISA...

NO HE
DOESN'T!!

...HE
THINKS
I'M
REALLY
BORING,
I JUST
KNOW IT!





SO LISTEN,
I'LL MAKE
SOME MOVES
ON TANAKA
TO PUT HIM IN
A "NOW OR
NEVER" FRAME
OF MIND...

AND YOU
STAY BY
HIM TO
GIVE HIM
A PUSH IF
HE LOOKS
LIKE HE
NEEDS IT.



SURE
IT'S FOR
MYSELF,
TOO!

...IS
SUCH
A WUSS.
BET HE
GETS
COLD
FEET.

THE
ONLY
PROBLEM
IS,
SUZUKI!
...

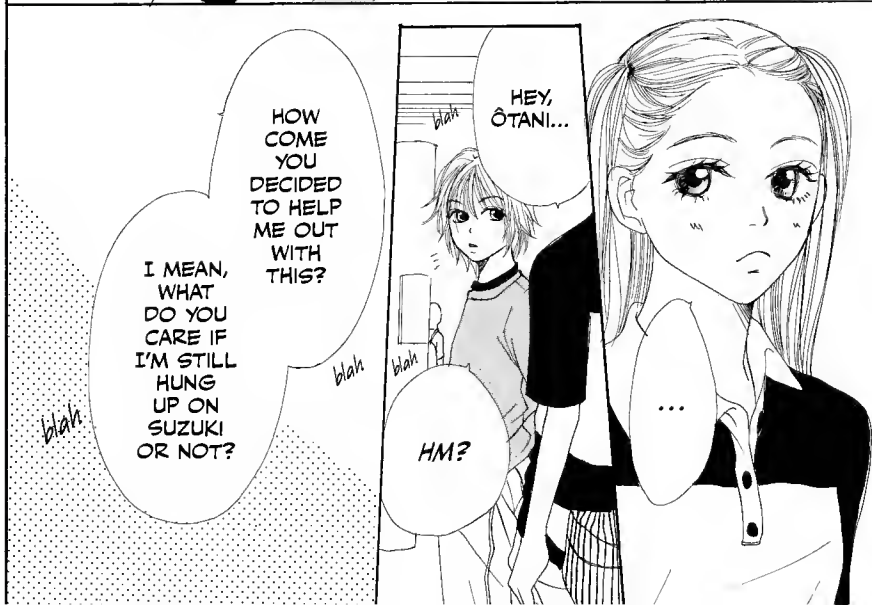
I WANT
TO HELP
THOSE
TWO GET
TOGETHER,
I REALLY
DO!!

BUT EVEN
MORE
THAN THAT,
IT'S FOR
CHIHARU!!



GOTCHA!

AND I
GUESS
THE REST
IS UP TO
SUZUKI.



HOW
COME
YOU
DECIDED
TO HELP
ME OUT
WITH
THIS?

I MEAN,
WHAT
DO YOU
CARE IF
I'M STILL
HUNG
UP ON
SUZUKI
OR NOT?

HEY,
ÔTANI...

HM?

...

IF YOU
DON'T
HURRY UP
AND GET
OVER
SUZUKI,
YOU WON'T
FIND A
BOYFRIEND.

AND IF YOU
DON'T FIND
A BOYFRIEND,
EVERYBODY
WILL KEEP
SAYING YOU
AND I ARE
A COUPLE.



...

I CARE
BECAUSE

...

UH-
HUH?



OHH.
SO
THAT'S
WHY.

...

...HEY

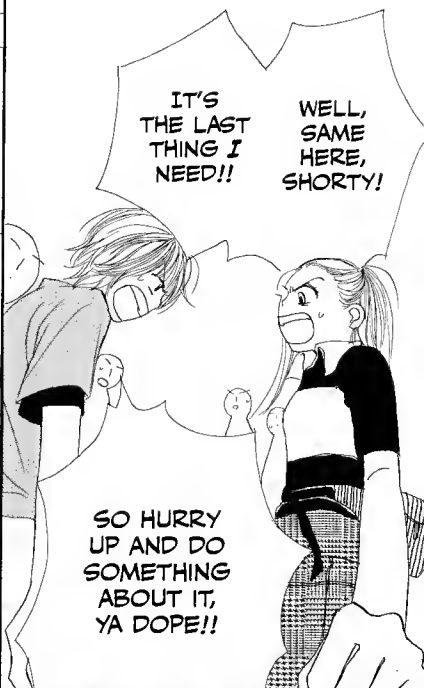
...



...

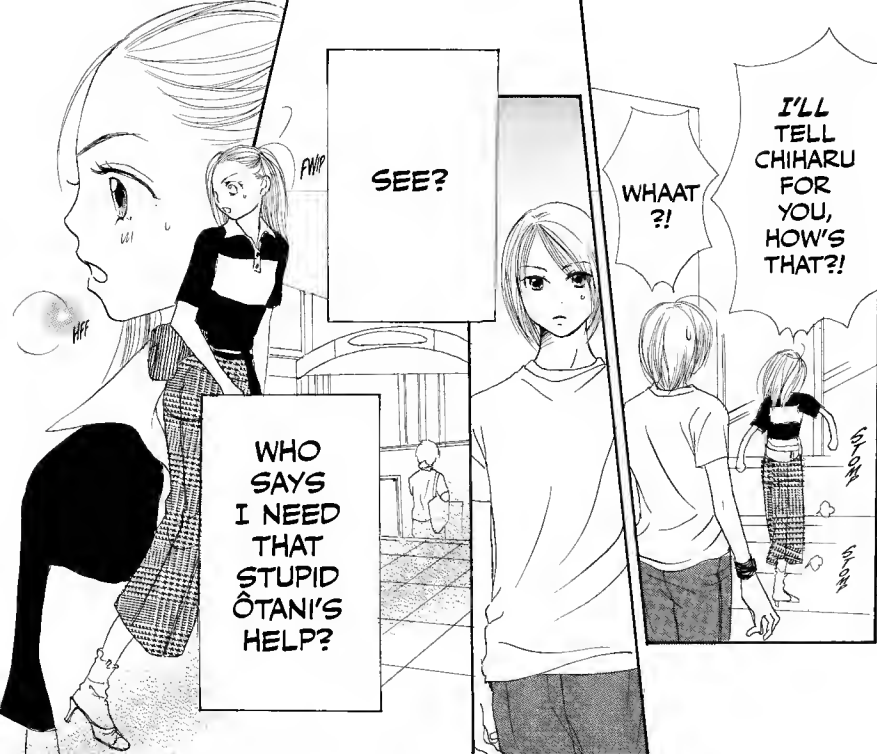
AND
THAT
IS THE
LAST
THING I
NEED.

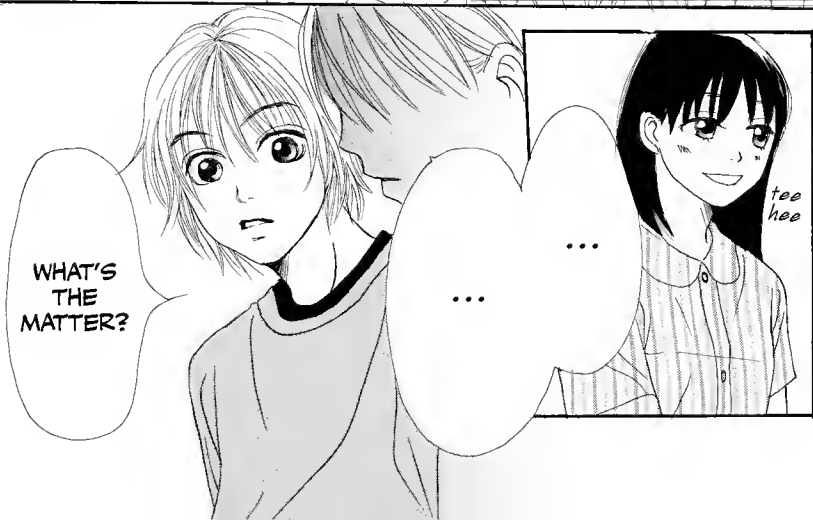
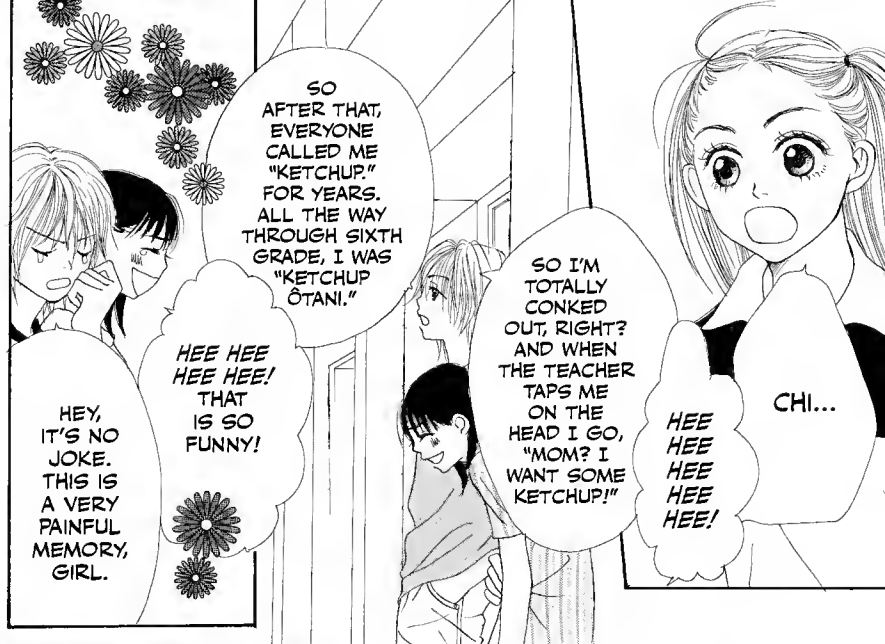














SO HOW
COME
I CAN'T
DO THAT
WHEN I'M
WITH
SUZUKI-
KUN?

WONDER
WHY IT
IS....

...WHEN I'M
WITH YOU,
I'M TOTALLY
NORMAL.
I CAN TALK
AND LAUGH
AND EVERY-
THING...



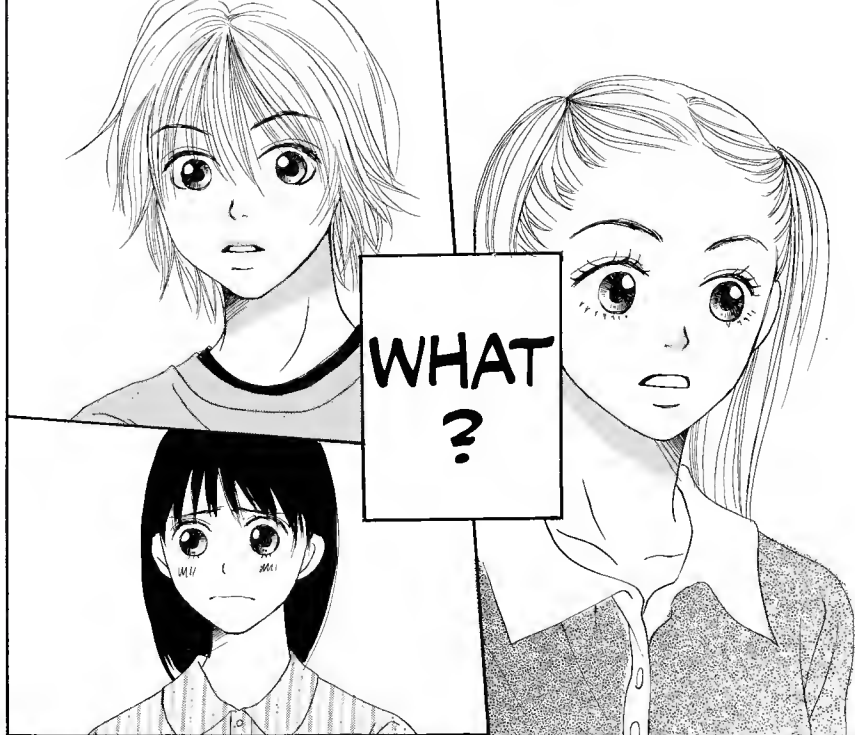
MAYBE...

TANAKA...



MAYBE...

I SHOULD
HAVE A
CRUSH ON
SOMEBODY
LIKE YOU,
INSTEAD.





HUH...?



I THINK
YOU'RE
LOOKING
AT IT ALL
WRONG.



THAT'S
ALL IT IS.
IT'S
NORMAL!

THE REASON
YOU GET SO
NERVOUS
AROUND SUZUKI
IS THAT HE'S
A GUY TO YOU.
YOU FEEL SELF-
CONSCIOUS
AROUND HIM CUZ
YOU LIKE HIM.

...YEAH...
BUT...



...THAT'S
NOT...

I'M NOT
A GUY,
REMEMBER?

...THAT
YOU
DON'T
THINK
OF ME
AS A
GUY.

YOU
TOLD
KOIZUMI
AND
NOBU
BEFORE
...





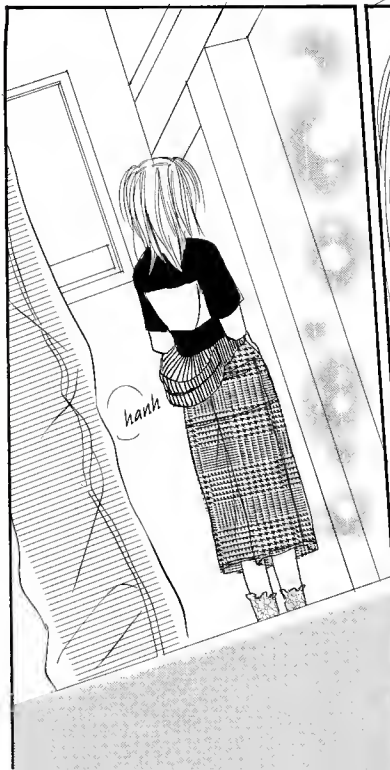
...OKAY.



Tump

SO DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT!
YOU'LL GET
OVER IT!

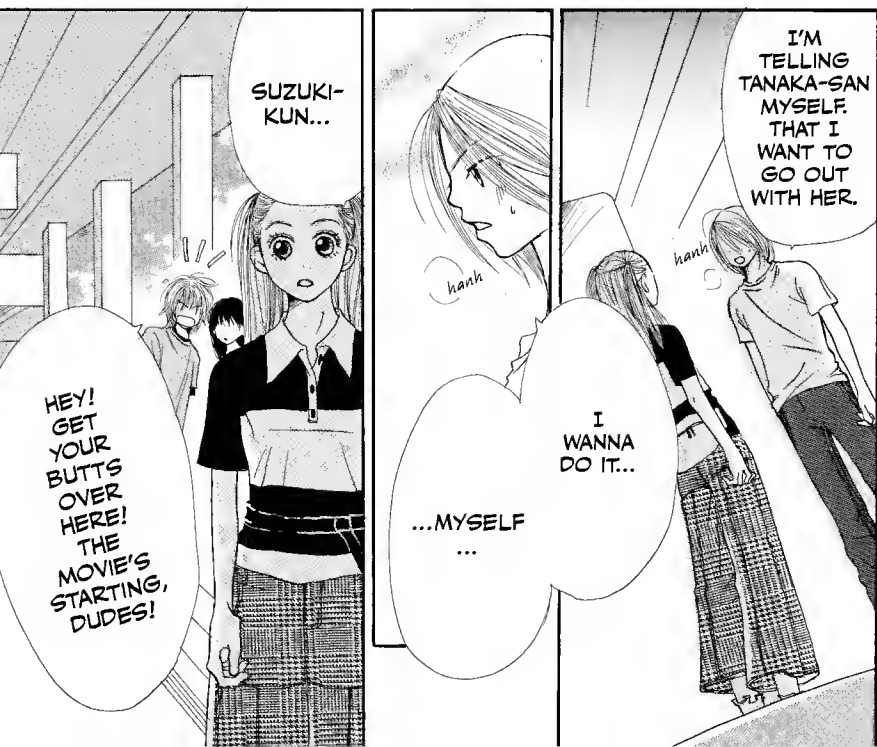
ONCE YOU
GET USED
TO BEING
AROUND HIM,
YOU'LL BE
ABLE TO
TALK TO HIM
JUST FINE!

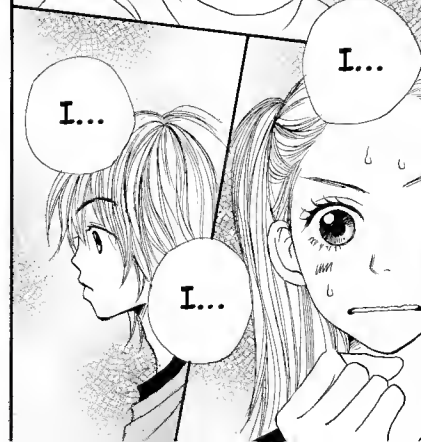


hah

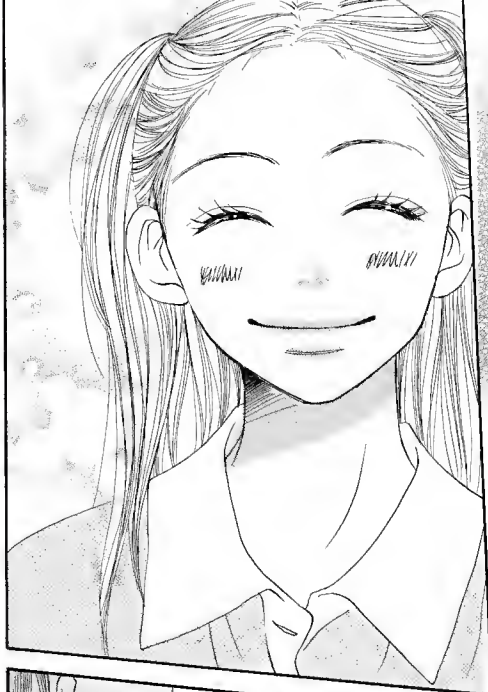


THANK
YOU.

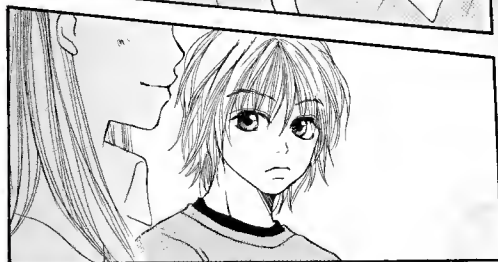


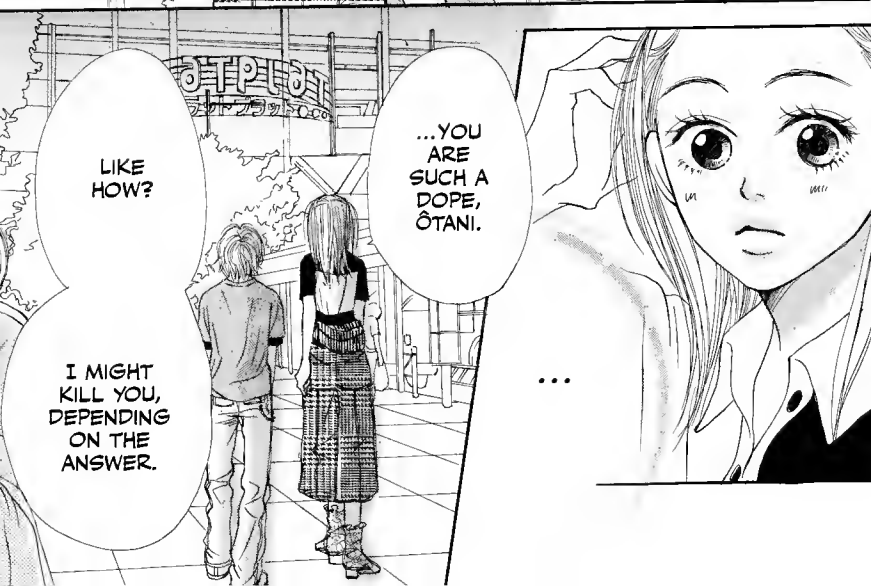
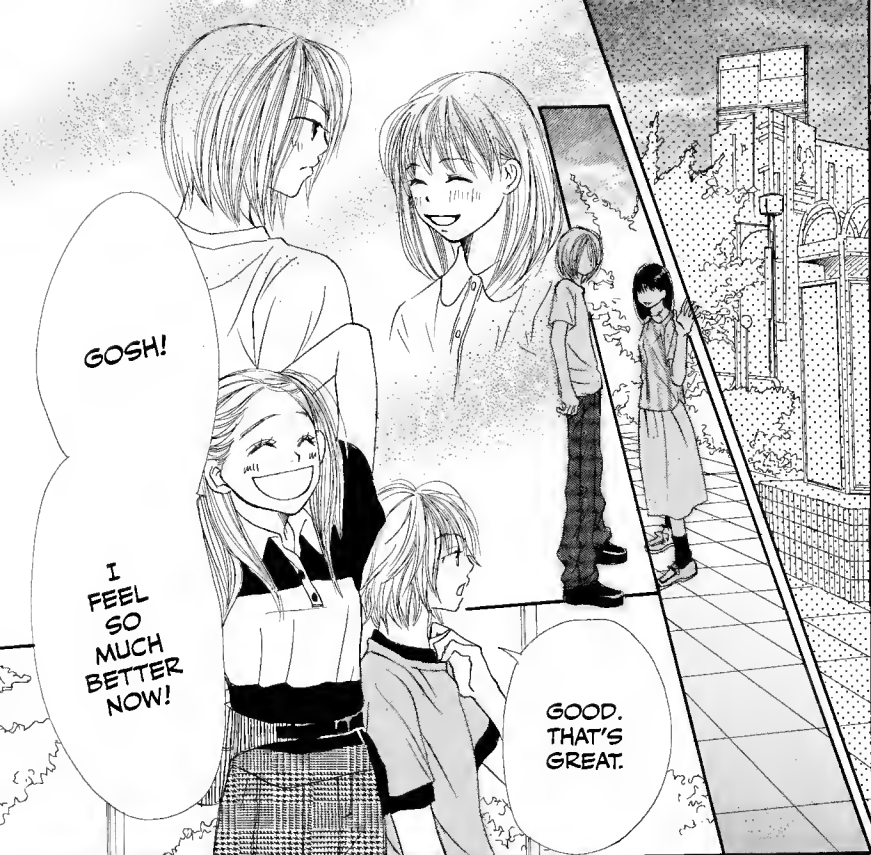






...YES.







GET
OUTTA
HERE.

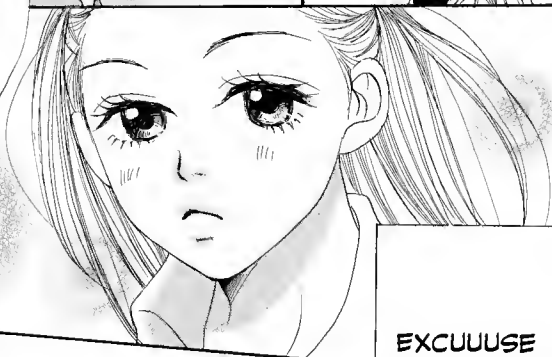
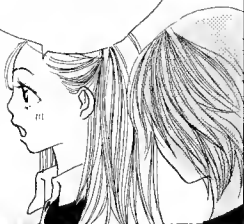
HOW MANY
TIMES DO
I HAVE TO
TELL YOU?
I'M NOT A
WISHY-WASHY
LOSER LIKE
YOU, OKAY?!

WHEN I
BOW OUT,
I STAY OUT.
END OF
STORY.



WHEN
YOU WERE
TALKING
TO CHIHARU
EARLIER...

...SHE
MIGHT'VE
FALLEN
FOR YOU IF
YOU'D SAID
SOMETHING
DIFFERENT.



EXCUUUUSE
ME, MISTER
MANLY-
KINDA-GUY.

...THAT
WE'RE
GOING
AROUND
HELPING
OTHER
PEOPLE GET
TOGETHER,
LIKE WE GOT
NOTHING
BETTER
TO DO.

MAN,
I CAN'T
BELIEVE...

OKAY,
WHAT-
EVER.

I'M GONNA
GET ME A
BOYFRIEND
SO FINE,
A LITTLE
SHRIMP LIKE
YOU WON'T
EVEN BE IN
THE SAME
LEAGUE!

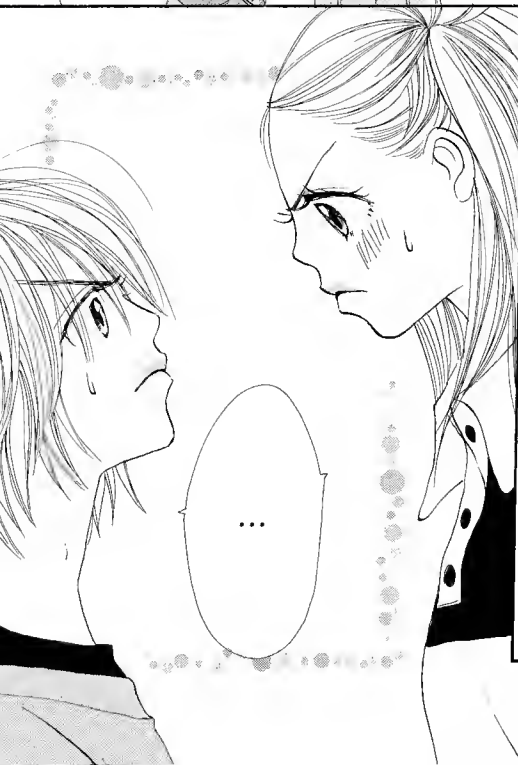
WELL,
LET ME
TELL YOU
SOME-
THING!

YEAH,
RIGHT.
GOOD
LUCK.



...
I SWEAR,
IT **KILLS**
ME THAT
THEY
COULD
EVEN
THINK IT!

UUP
I KNOW,
HUH? LIKE
SETTING
EVERYBODY
STRAIGHT
ABOUT **US**.

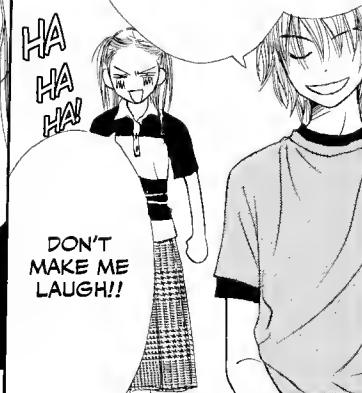


BUT I
COULD
FIND A
GIRLFRIEND
LIKE **THAT**,
IF I
WANTED.

SO
OKAY,
THIS
TIME
WAS A
BUST.

HA
HA
HA!

DON'T
MAKE ME
LAUGH!!





WHOEVER
GETS
TOGETHER
WITH
SOMEONE
FIRST WINS.



FINE,
THEN.

YOU
WANNA
MAKE A
BET?



OKAY.

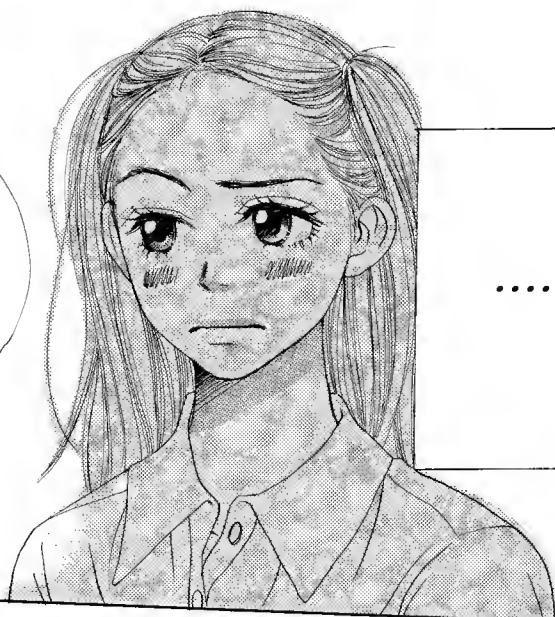
GOOD.
SO
THAT'S
SETTLED,
THEN.

SO I'LL
GIVE YOU
WHATEVER
YOU WANT
IF *YOU* WIN.



WHAT'LL
YOU GIVE
ME IF I
WIN?

WHATEVER
YOU WANT.



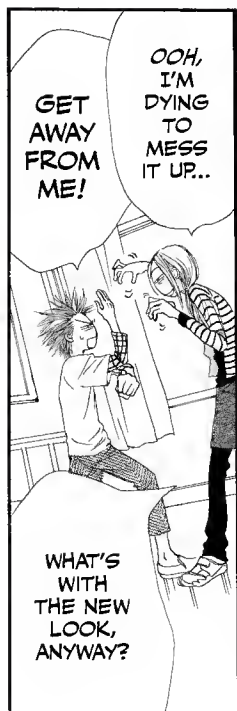
YOU'LL
SEE. I'M
GONNA
WIN.

.....

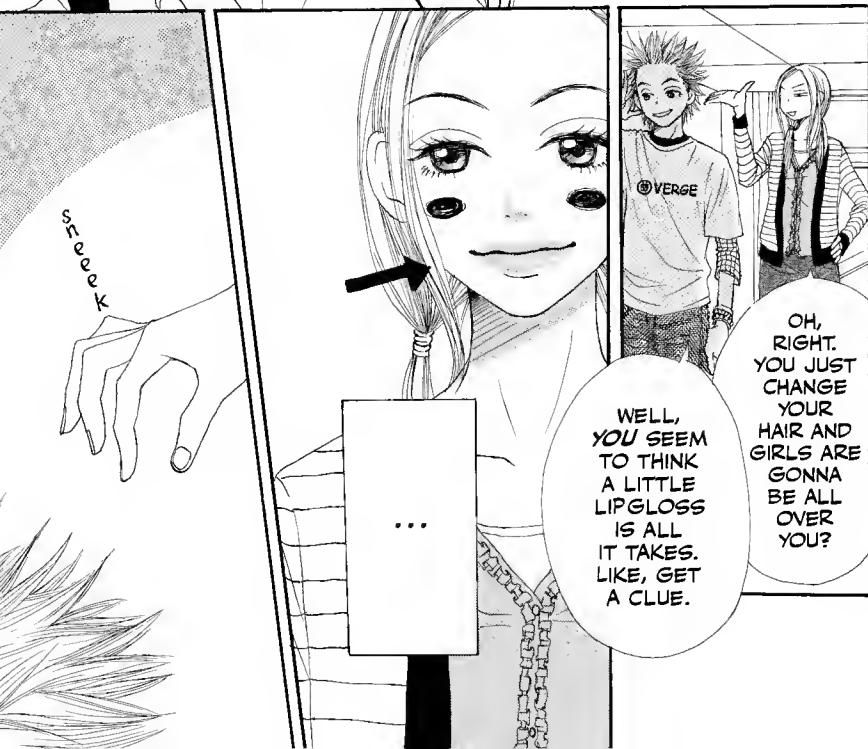
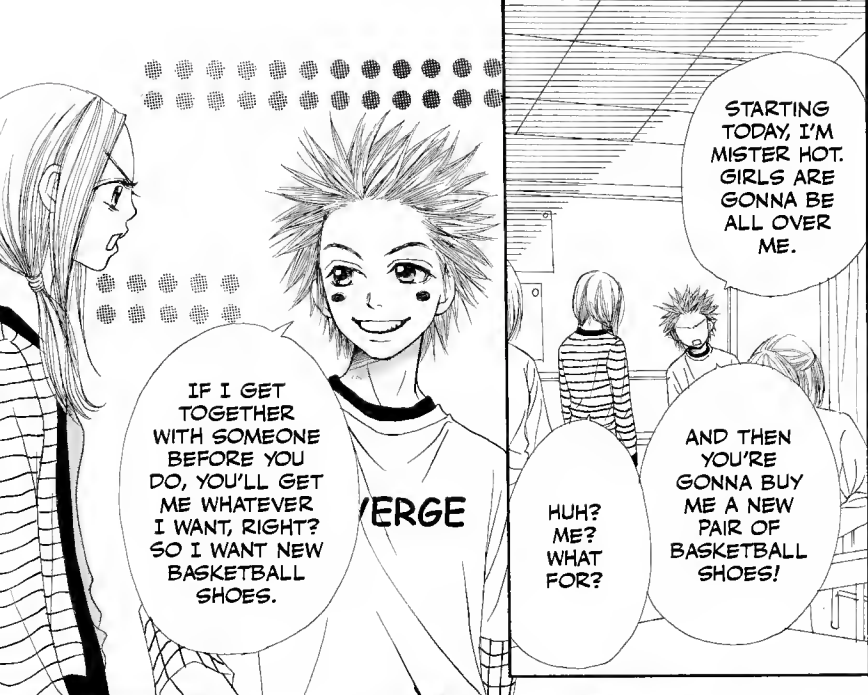
WHY
DOES
THIS
MAKE
ME SO
MAD?

OH,
SHUT
UP!

Whadja
say?



CHAPTER 4





I SHOULDN'T
HAVE AGREED
TO THAT BET
SO FAST.

CLATTER!

GOTCHA!!



OH.



OKAY!

BZZZZ

AND WHEN
I FINALLY
GET A
CRUSH
ON SOMEONE,
HE GETS
TOGETHER
WITH A
FRIEND OF
MINE.

NOBU!
CHIHARU!
LET'S GO
HOME
TOGETHER!

NOT THAT
I'M PROUD
OF IT, BUT
I'VE NEVER
HAD THE
GUYS ALL
OVER ME
IN MY LIFE.

OF
COURSE,
I'VE
NEVER
EVEN
ONCE HAD
A BOY-
FRIEND.

Gee...
This
sure
is a
lot of
fun...

YOU
CAN SAY
THAT
AGAIN.

LOVEY

DOLEY

LOVEY

DOLEY

SO THERE
IS NO WAY
I'M GOING
TO FIND
MYSELF A
BOYFRIEND,
JUST LIKE
THAT.

I
SWEAR
I'M
GONNA
SUE YOU
FOR
REAL!

GO
AHEAD.
WHEN-
EVER
YOU
WANT.

OOH,
A "LOVE
FORTUNE"
MACHINE!
HEY, DARLIN'
LET'S DO
THIS!!

JEEZ,
YOU HAVE
ANY IDEA
HOW LONG
I SPENT
ON MY
HAIR THIS
MORNING?

ARE
YOU
STILL
GOING
ON ABOUT
YOUR
HAIR?
GROW
UP! OH,
SORRY,
GUESS
THAT
ISN'T AN
OPTION!

HEY, WHO
ASKED YOU
TO WALK
HOME
WITH US,
ANYWAY?

LIMP

I GOTTA
GO BY
NAKAO'S
HOUSE FOR
SOMETHING,
ALL RIGHT?

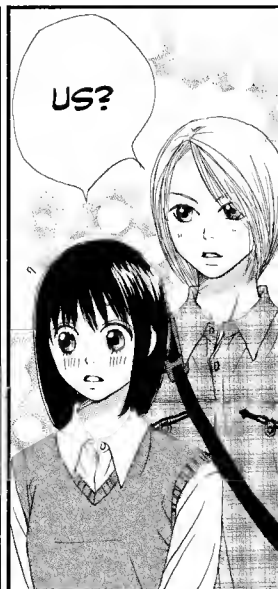
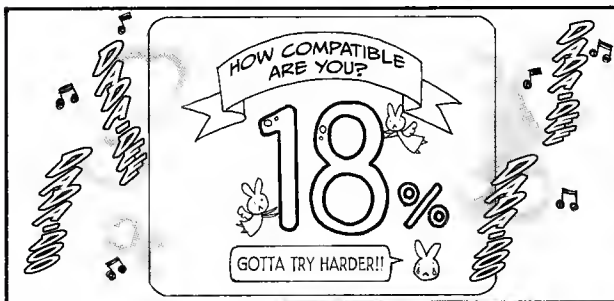


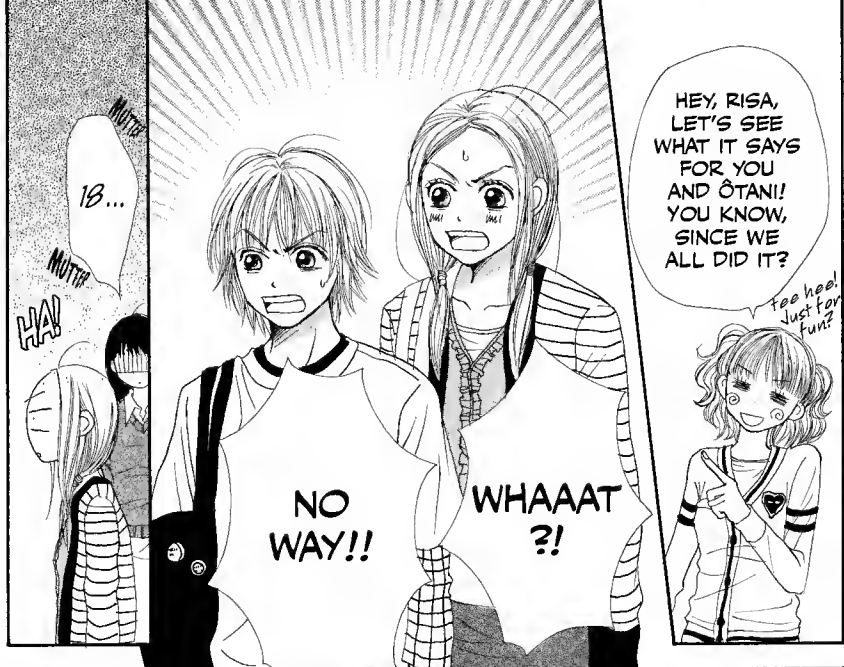
WOW, 85 PERCENT! THAT'S REALLY GOOD!

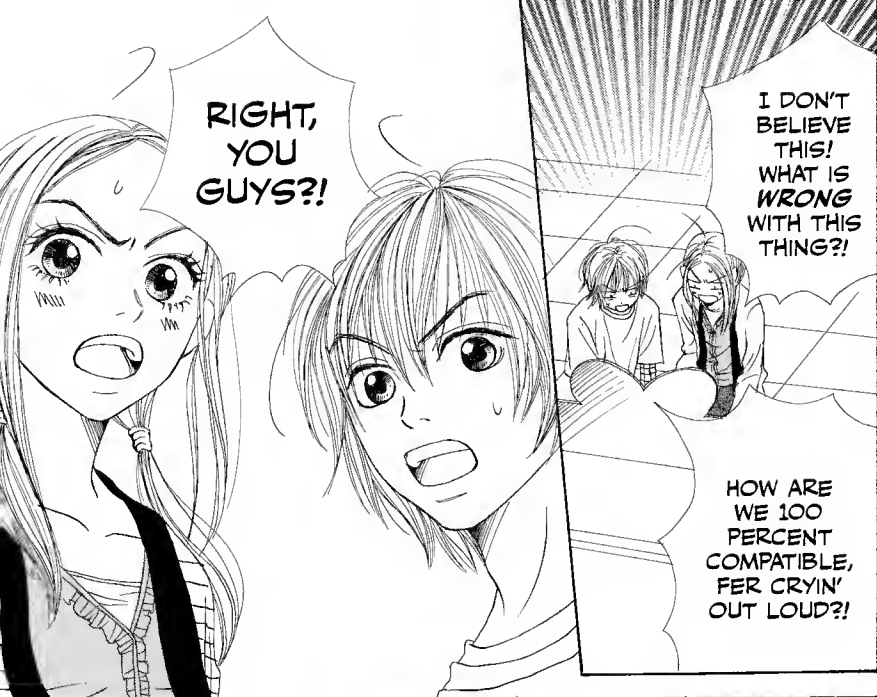
THERE'S NO WAY THIS MUNCHKIN IS GOING TO FIND A GIRLFRIEND JUST LIKE THAT, EITHER.

HEY! STOP USING ME AS AN ARMREST!

GET HIM NEW BASKETBALL SHOES? NOT ON YOUR LIFE.







RIGHT,
YOU
GUYS?!

I DON'T
BELIEVE
THIS!
WHAT IS
WRONG
WITH THIS
THING?!

HOW ARE
WE 100
PERCENT
COMPATIBLE,
FER CRYIN'
OUT LOUD?!



THIS
THING IS
OBVIOUSLY
OUT OF
WHACK!!

CHIHARU,
COME
ON!!

SO
IF IT
GAVE
US 18,
WE
MUST
BE
REALLY
...

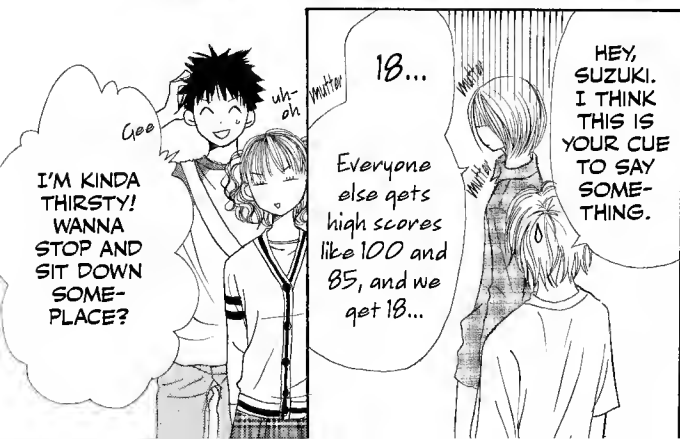
IT'S SET
UP TO
GIVE ONLY
GOOD
SCORES
LIKE 100
AND 85,
YOU CAN
TELL...



100...

DO OM

OOPS.

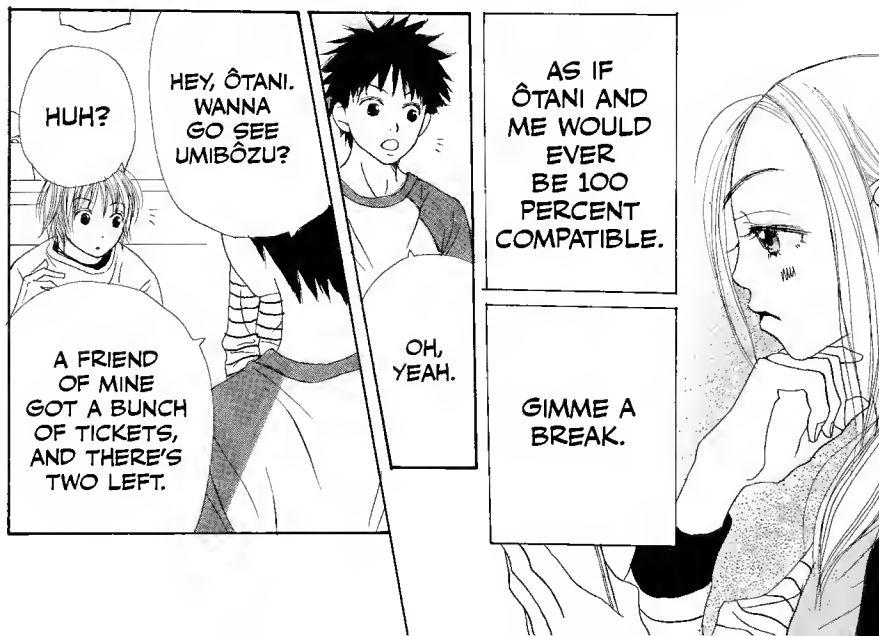
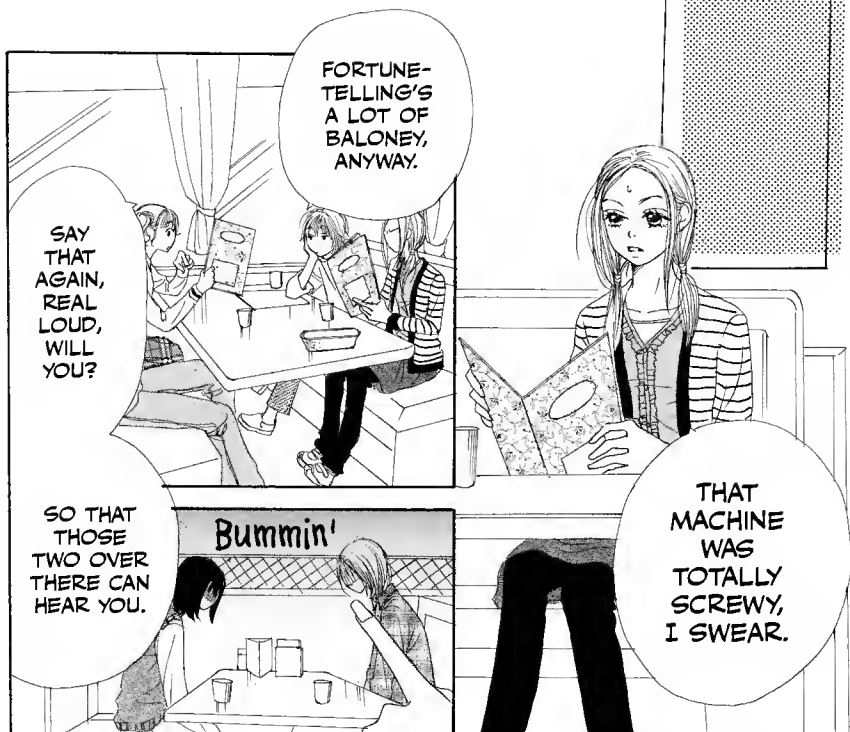


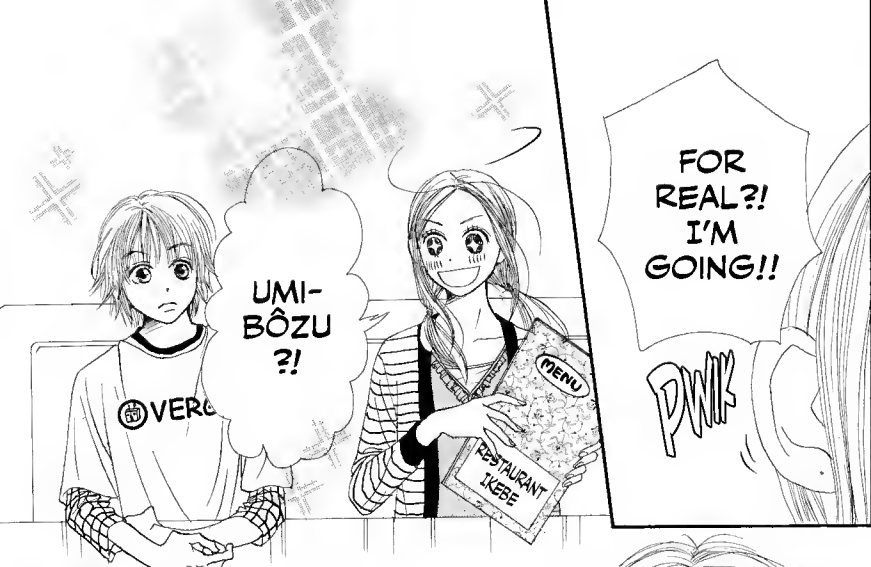
I'M KINDA
THIRSTY!
WANNA
STOP AND
SIT DOWN
SOME-
PLACE?

18...

Everyone
else gets
high scores
like 100 and
85, and we
get 18...

HEY,
SUZUKI.
I THINK
THIS IS
YOUR CUE
TO SAY
SOME-
THING.





UMI-
BÔZU
?!

FOR
REAL?!
I'M
GOING!!

PNK



I
LOVED
IT!

YEAH,
IT'S SO
GREAT!
DIDN'T
YOU
TOTALLY
LOVE
IT?!

YOU
HEARD
HIS
LATEST
ONE?!

I KNOW,
HUH?!
HE'S THE
BEST!

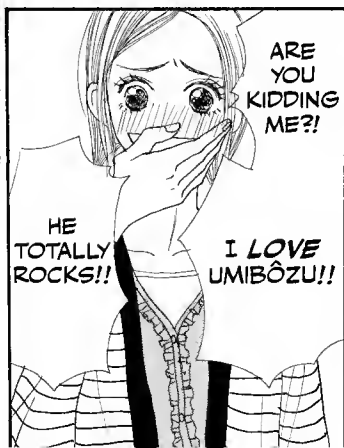
DOESN'T
HE HAVE
THE
COOLEST
VOICE?

YEAH,
THE
WAY
IT'S...

OOOPS



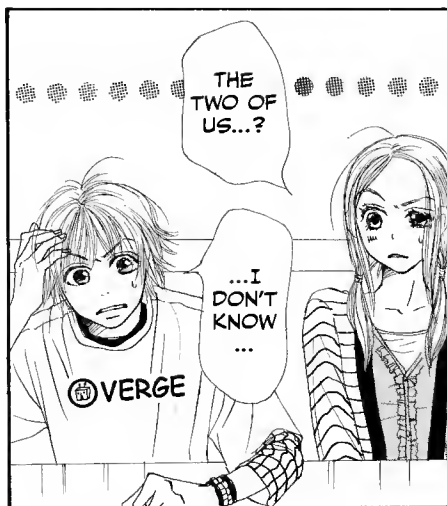
NO WAY!
YOU
LIKE HIM
TOO?



ARE
YOU
KIDDING
ME?!

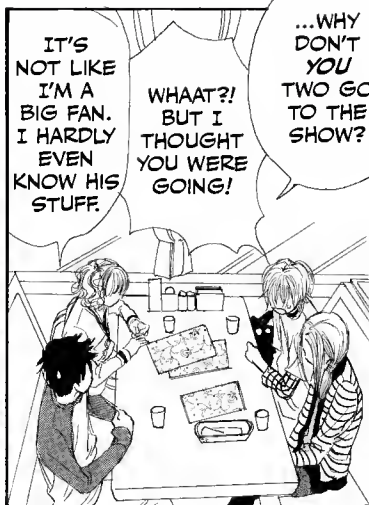
HE
TOTALLY
ROCKS!!

I LOVE
UMIBÔZU!!



THE
TWO OF
US...?

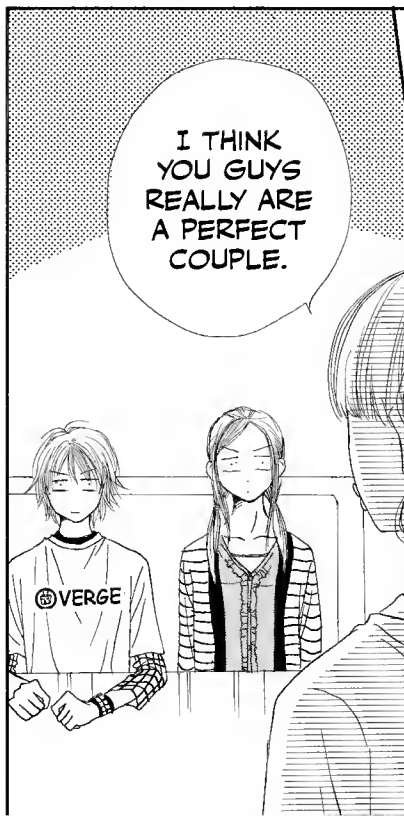
...I
DON'T
KNOW
...



IT'S
NOT LIKE
I'M A
BIG FAN.
I HARDLY
EVEN
KNOW HIS
STUFF.

WHAAT?!
BUT I
THOUGHT
YOU WERE
GOING!

...WHY
DON'T
YOU
TWO GO
TO THE
SHOW?



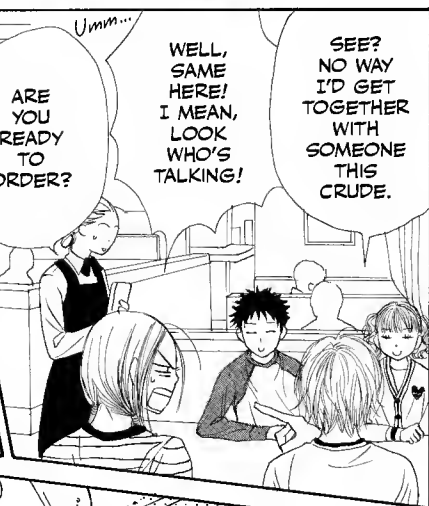
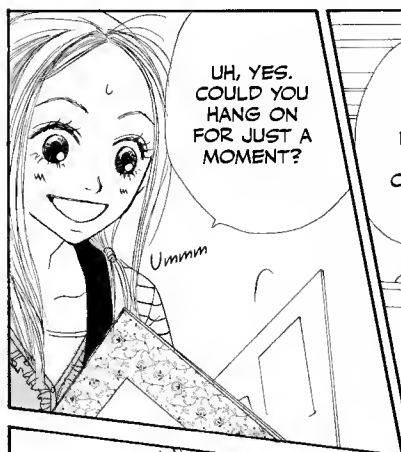
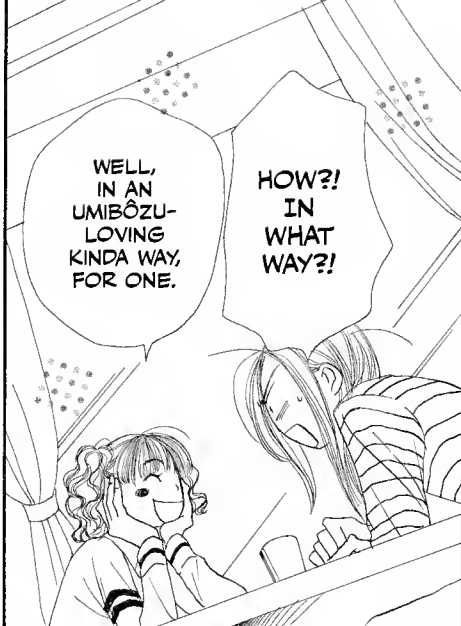
I THINK
YOU GUYS
REALLY ARE
A PERFECT
COUPLE.

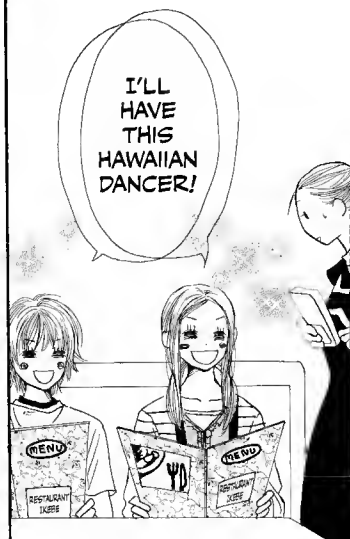
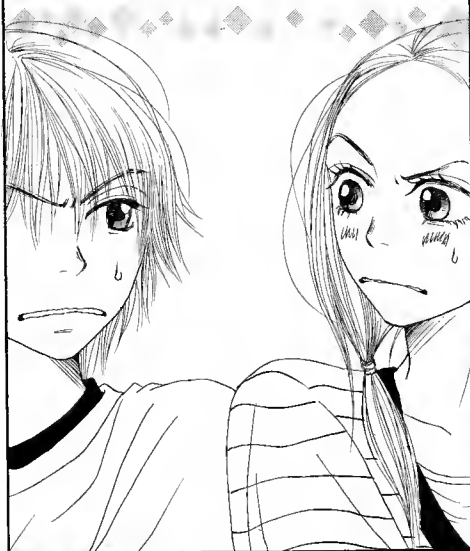
HUH?



...
LEMME
THINK
ABOUT
IT FOR A
WHILE...

YOU
KNOW WHAT
I THINK?
I THINK THAT
MACHINE
WAS RIGHT.





I'LL
HAVE
THIS
HAWAIIAN
DANCER!

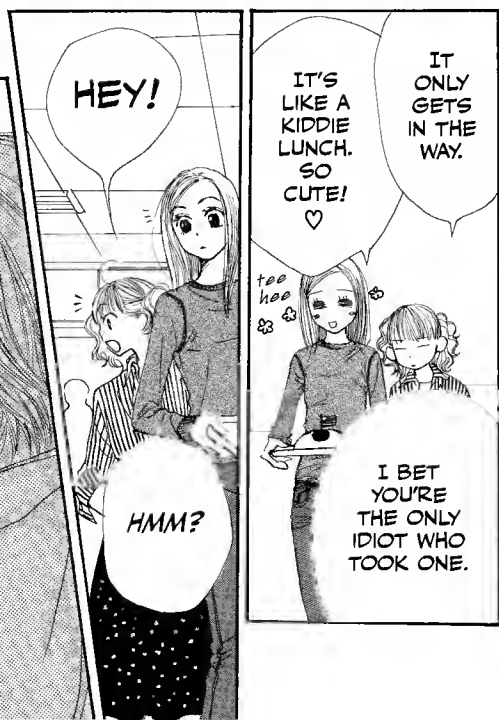
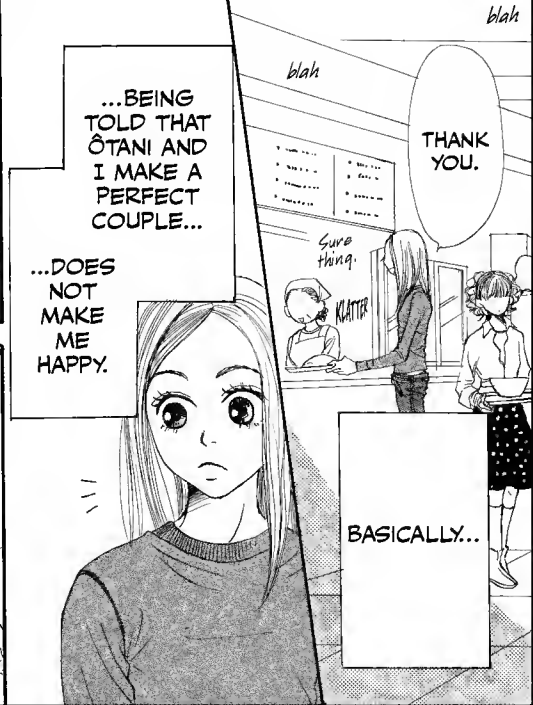


HERE
YOU
GO!

NO,
WE
ARE
NOT!!

SEE?

They
really
are.





4.

Dops!! We're almost at the end. Thank you for reading this far. I hope I get to meet you again in Vol. 2. And thank you to everybody who sends me letters! I read every single one. But I can't answer them all, which is causing this scrupulous artist chronic stomach pains. So I'd like to take these feelings of gratitude and repay you through my manga!! And I'm trying to do that. I really am... but is it showing...?

*Well, see you again! **

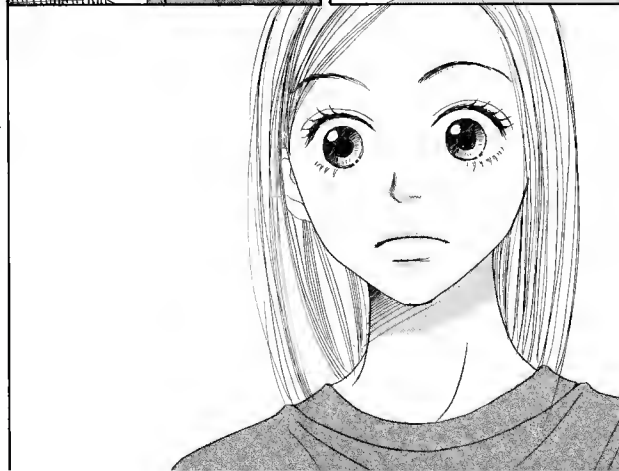
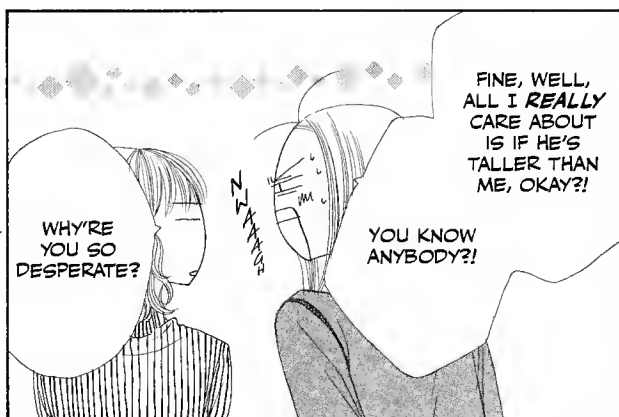
Aya

February 2002

** Special Thanks **

*Rumiko Sawada
Nana Ikebe
Aki Nakahara*

and you ♥





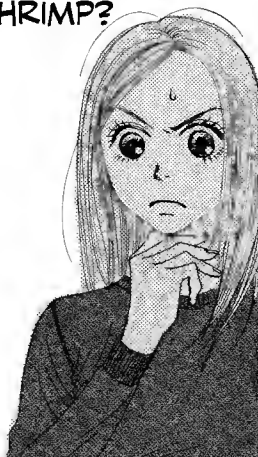
I'm
done 18...
See you
later 18...

BUT HE
CAN'T
BE.

K
F
U
N

ÔTANI'S
POPULAR?

THAT
LITTLE
SHRIMP?



...SURELY
YOU JEST.

I'M
ABSO-
LUTELY
SERIOUS.



OVER
THERE.
SEE
THEM?

LET'S
SEE.
WHERE
ARE
THEY?

B
Y
E



I'm going
back to
the class-
room 18...

YEAH.
SHE'S
TRAUMA-
TIZED BY
THAT 18
PERCENT.

WE
GOTTA
DO SOME-
THING TO
GET HER
OUT OF
THAT.



ARE YOU
SERIOUS?



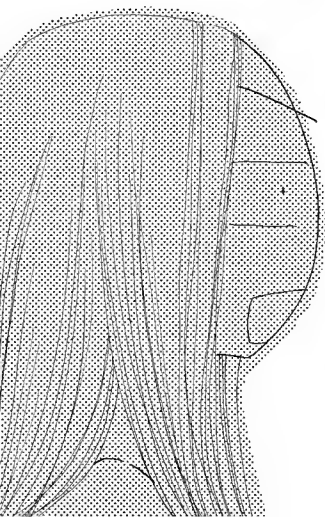
ANYWAY,
THEY'RE
ALWAYS
WATCHING
ÔTANI AND
SQUEALING.

I THINK
THEY'RE
SECOND-
OR THIRD-
YEAR
GIRLS.



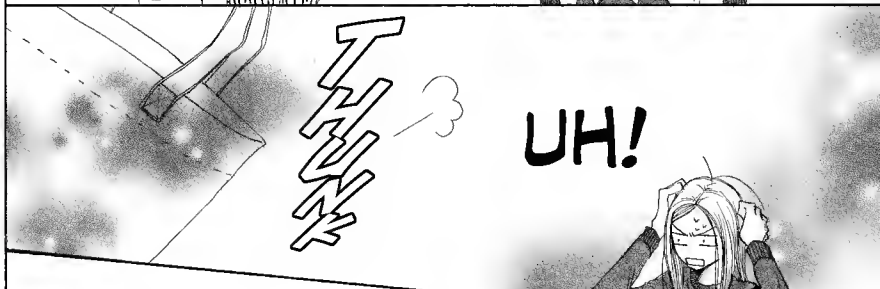
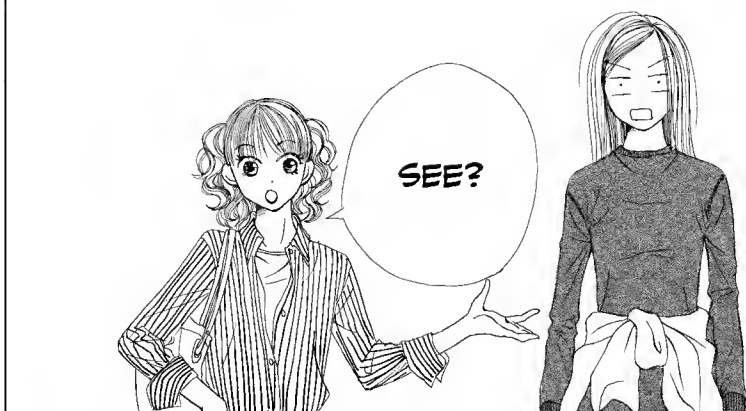
REALLY?
OH,
YEAH.

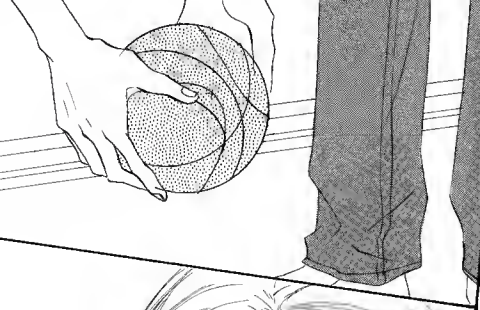
OH, LOOK.
ÔTANI-KUN'S
GETTING
YELLED AT
BY THE
COACH
AGAIN.



HE
IS SO
CUTE!







HOW
TOTALLY
UNFAIR!!



ROLL



OHhh,
FROM OUR
SISTER!
WELL,
AREN'T WE
ADORABLE!

THESE? I
BORROWED
'EM FROM
MY SIS
CUZ...

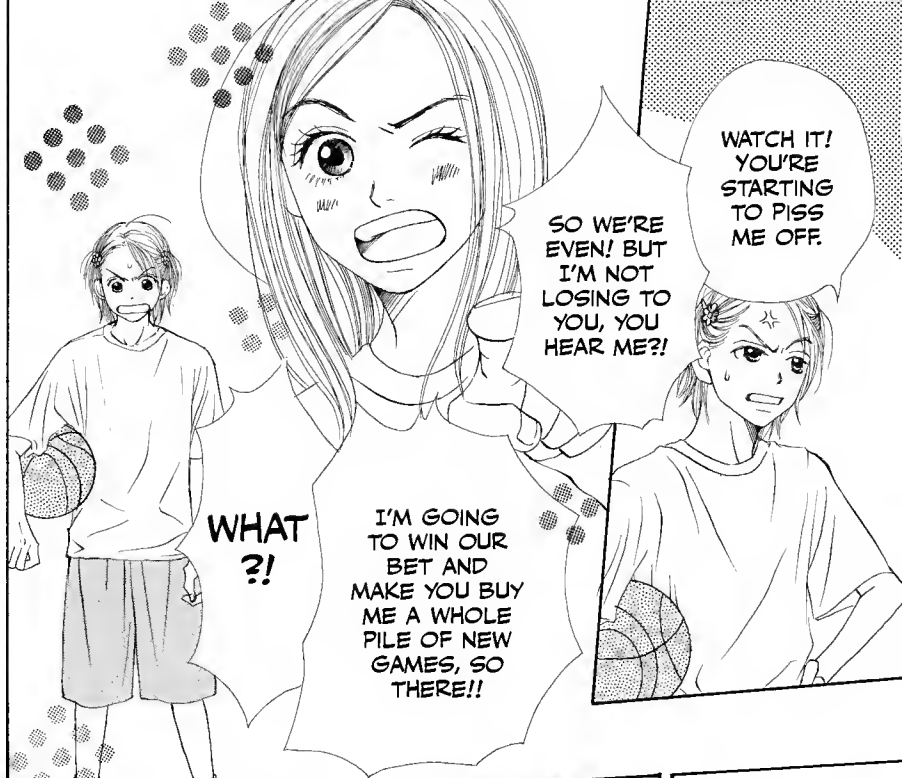
PINNING
OUR HAIR
TO THE
SIDES LIKE
A CUTE
LITTLE
GIRL!

ARE WE
UPPING OUR
CUTESY-NESS
WITH THOSE
SWEET LITTLE
FLOWER
PINS?

OH-
HO!

HUH?

WHAT'S
WITH THAT
CRAB-UGLY
LOOK
ON YOUR
FACE...?



SO WE'RE
EVEN! BUT
I'M NOT
LOSING TO
YOU, YOU
HEAR ME?!

WATCH IT!
YOU'RE
STARTING
TO PISS
ME OFF.

WHAT
?!

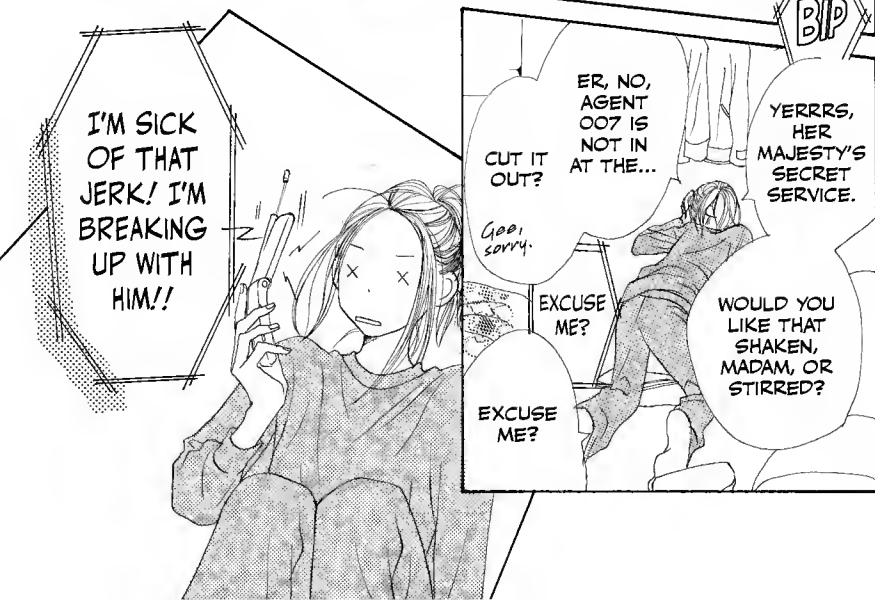
I'M GOING
TO WIN OUR
BET AND
MAKE YOU BUY
ME A WHOLE
PILE OF NEW
GAMES, SO
THERE!!

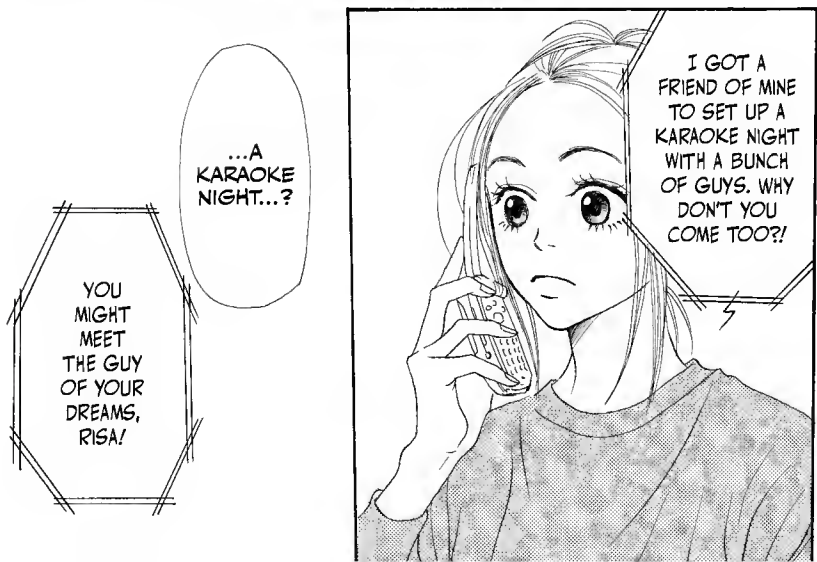
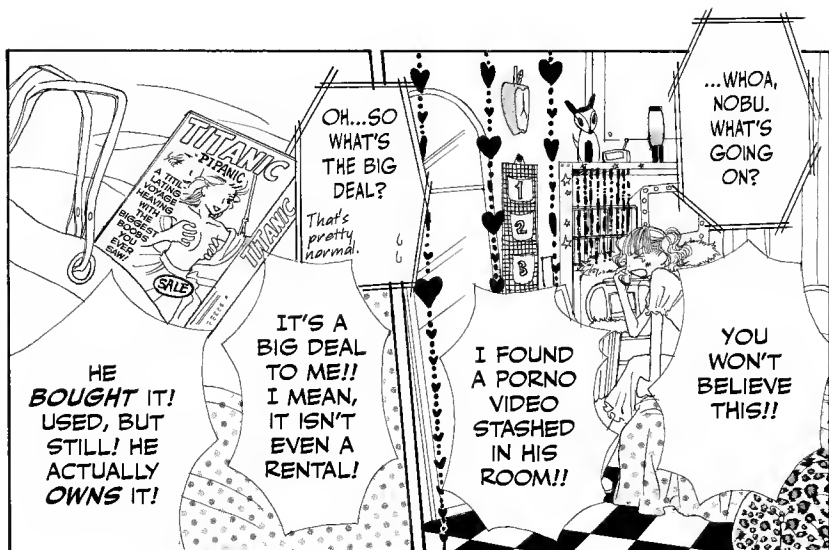
DARN
HIM. IT'S
JUST SO
UNFAIR...

WHAT'S
EATING
HER ALL
OF A
SUDDEN?

*Might've
known it would
be games.*









TOTALLY!

YOU
WANNA
GO?

THE GUY
OF MY
DREAMS

...



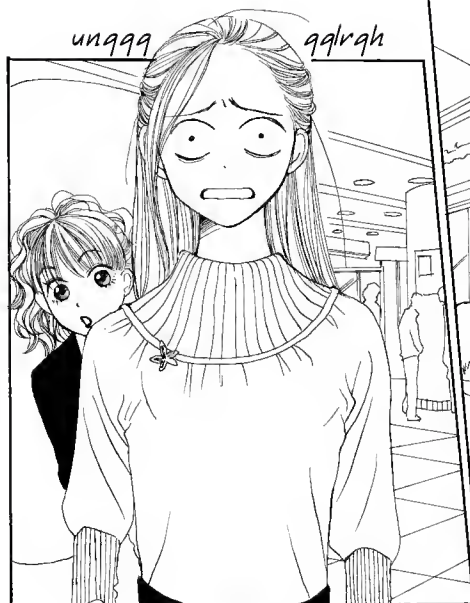
...MAKE
THAT
SHRIMP
CRY
UNCLE!!

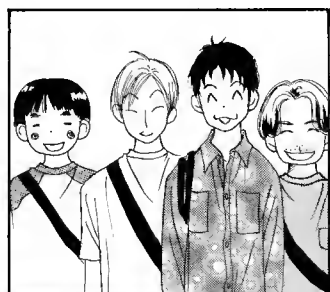
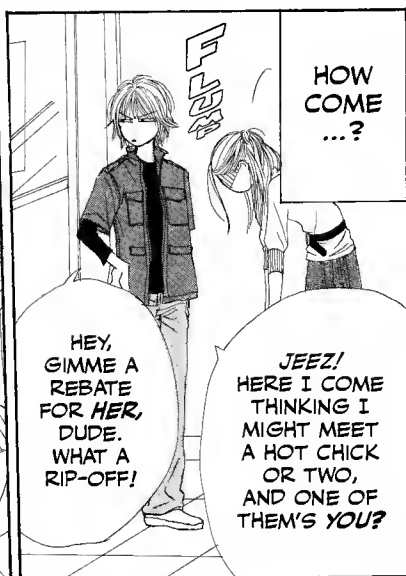


WHO SAYS
I HAVE TO
LOSE THE
BET JUST
BECAUSE A
FEW GIRLS
THINK ÔTANI'S
CUTE?

I'M GONNA
GO ALL OUT
TONIGHT,
FIND ME A
GORGEOUS
HUNK, AND...









HEEEEEERE
YOU GO,
RISA!

OH,
WHO
CARES
WHAT
THEY
LOOK
LIKE?!

PERSON-
ALITY IS
WHAT
REALLY
COUNTS!



WHAT'S SHE
MUTTERING
LIKE SOME
BAG LADY?

WELL,
BETTER
PETS THAN
FARM
ANIMALS...

OR
MARINE
PRODUCTS,
LIKE
SHRIMP.

COME
ON, RISA,
WE'RE
GOING.



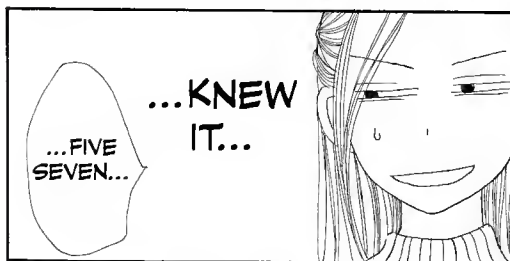
Ha
ha
ha...

I SAY,
YO0000!
YO0000!
YO! YO!
YO! YO!

UH-
HUH
...

HEYYYY,
WHASS UP?!
WE'RE HERE
TO PARTY,
RIGHT?!
CHEER UP,
GIRL!

...THANKS
...



...FIVE
SEVEN...

...KNEW
IT...

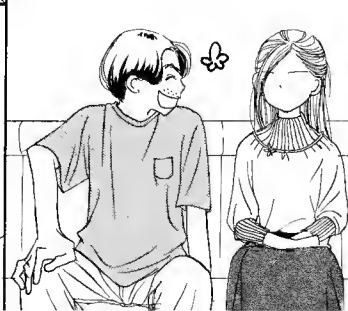


SO HEY,
BY THE
WAY...
WHAT'S
YOUR
HEIGHT?



WOW,
THAT'S
REALLY
TALL!

figures...



OH MY
GOD...

Ha
ha
ha
ha
ha
ha.

GET ME
OUT OF
HERE...
THIS GUY
IS SUCH
A DORK...

IF YOU'RE
ALREADY THAT
TALL NOW,
BET YOU'LL BE
ABOUT NINE
FEET BY THE
TIME YOU
GRADUATE!

Just
kidding!

NINE FEET,
HA HA!
I'M A RIOT,
HUH? MY
FRIENDS ALL
CALL ME
THE JOKER!

ha
ha
ha
ha

Ha ha ha.
Yeah,
right.
I hope
not...

URRR-
RRGH...

K
K
K

MONTEREY YO!
JACK!

CLOSER
TOGETHER,
YOU GUYS!

OKAY,
SAY
CHEESE!

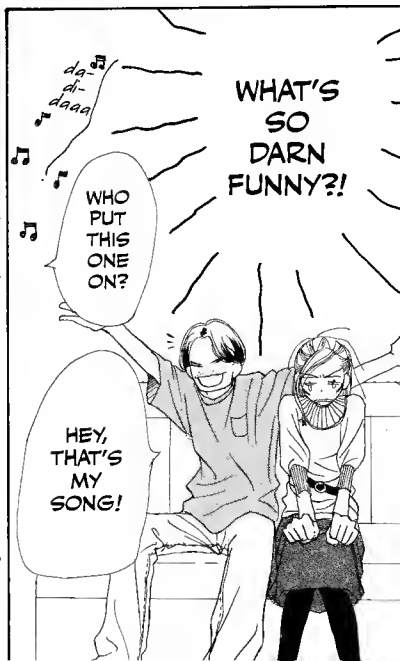
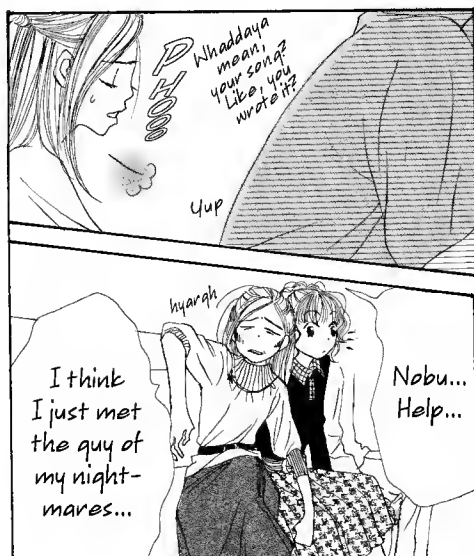
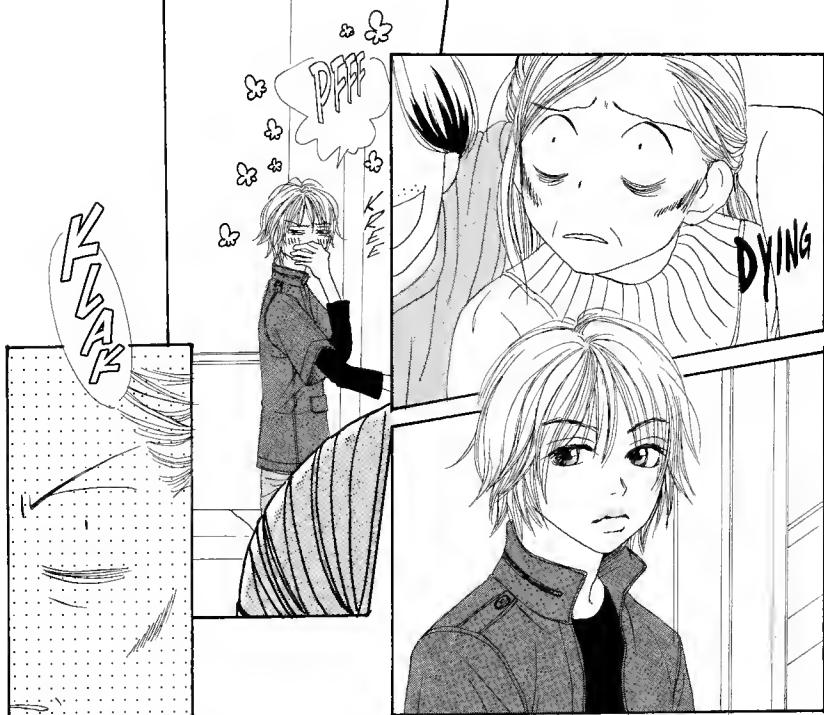
One
more!

KUK

JUST
STEPPING
OUTSIDE
FOR SOME
FRESH AIR.

WHAAT?

HEY,
ÔTANI-
KUN?
WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?



URGH...

THAT'S WHY
I'M SAYING
THAT HAVING
THE SAME
TASTES
AND STUFF
REALLY
MATTERS.

HOW MANY
GUYS ARE
YOU GONNA
MEET
WHO'RE 100
PERCENT
COMPATIBLE
WITH YOU?

I MEAN,
HE THINKS
HE'S FUNNY
AND I
DON'T...
LIKE, WE
JUST DON'T
CLICK...

I KNOW,
BUT HE'S
SUCH A
GIANT
PAIN.

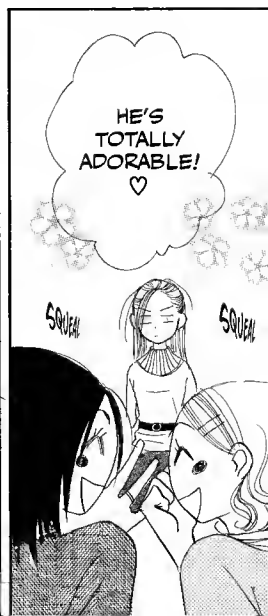
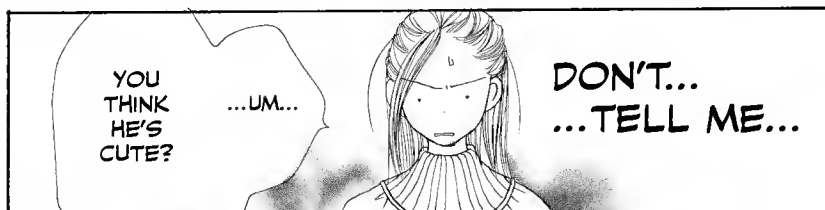
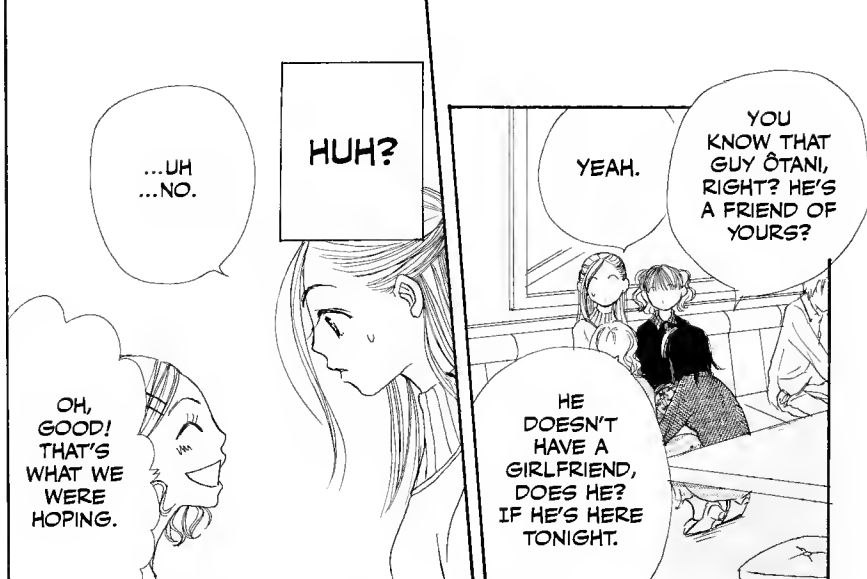
I
THOUGHT
ALL YOU
REALLY
CARED
ABOUT WAS
IF HE WAS
TALLER
THAN YOU.

...HMMM

...

I REALLY
THINK
ÔTANI'S
THE BEST
GUY FOR
YOU, RISA.
I'M TOTALLY
SERIOUS.

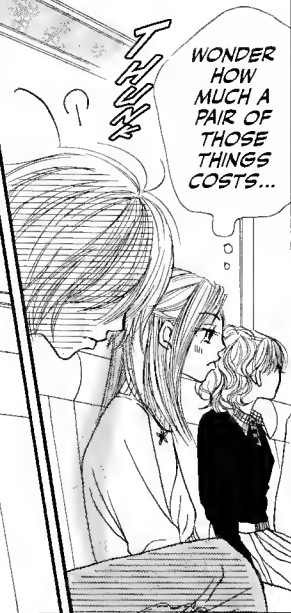
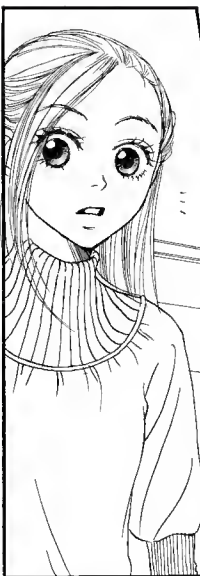
HEY
THERE.



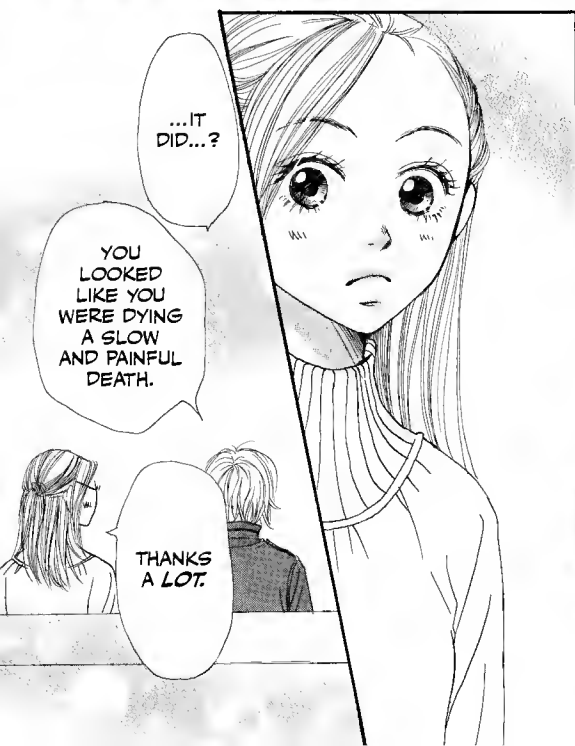


YOUR SEAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE. WHY'RE YOU HERE ...?

YOU WANT THAT DUDE WHO DRIVES YOU CRAZY TO COME SIT BESIDE YOU AGAIN?



WONDER HOW MUCH A PAIR OF THOSE THINGS COSTS...



...IT DID...?

YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE DYING A SLOW AND PAINFUL DEATH.

THANKS A LOT.



...WHAT?

YOUR FACE HAD "GET ME OUTTA HERE" WRITTEN ALL OVER IT.



NO
WAY
...

THEY
THINK
YOU'RE
ADORABLE.

ALL
THE
GIRLS
HERE.

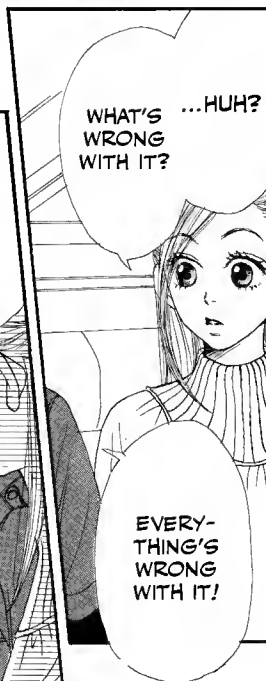


THE
EVIL
EYE?
FROM
WHO?

BUT IF YOU
DON'T GO
BACK TO
YOUR SEAT,
I'M GONNA
GET THE
EVIL EYE.

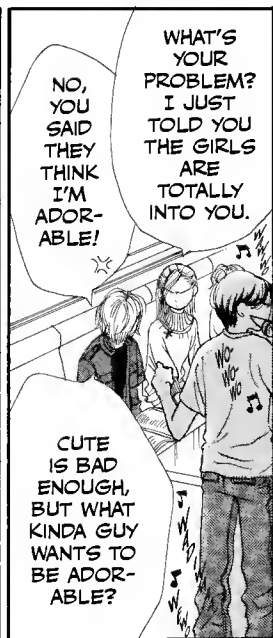


I WANNA
BE GOOD-
LOOKING!
OR HOT!
OR HUNKY!
OKAY?



WHAT'S ...HUH?
WRONG
WITH IT?

EVERY-
THING'S
WRONG
WITH IT!



NO,
YOU
SAID
THEY
THINK
I'M
ADOR-
ABLE!

WHAT'S
YOUR
PROBLEM?
I JUST
TOLD YOU
THE GIRLS
ARE
TOTALLY
INTO YOU.

CUTE
IS BAD
ENOUGH,
BUT WHAT
KINDA GUY
WANTS TO
BE ADOR-
ABLE?

...AND
...

...GOSH.
WHO
KNEW?

JUST
DO ME A
FAVOR AND
LET ME
STAY HERE,
WILL YA?

*I swear my
head's still
spinning.*

THE REASON
I HAD TO STEP
OUTSIDE WAS,
THEY GOT
ON SO MUCH
PERFUME IT'S
MAKING ME
FEEL SICK.

WHAT'S
SO DARN
FUNNY?!

OMIGOD,
THIS
IS--!!

UMIBÔZU?! NO WAY!
BUT HOW?!

WE ARE
BOTH
TOTALLY
HOPELESS
AT THIS!

hee
hee

JEEZ.



BUT WHY DO THEY EVEN HAVE UMIBÔZU IN THE FIRST PLACE?!

OMIGOD!!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
I'M SINGING THIS WITH YOU!!

I KNOW, YOU'D THINK HE'S WAY TOO OBSCURE FOR KARAOKE, RIGHT?!



I PUT IT ON.



TOTALLY INTO IT

HEY!!

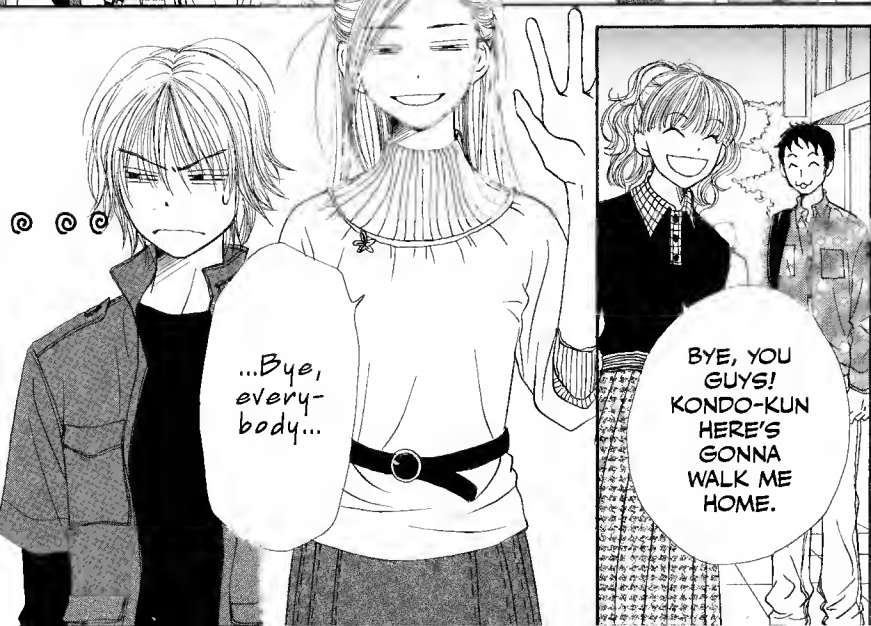
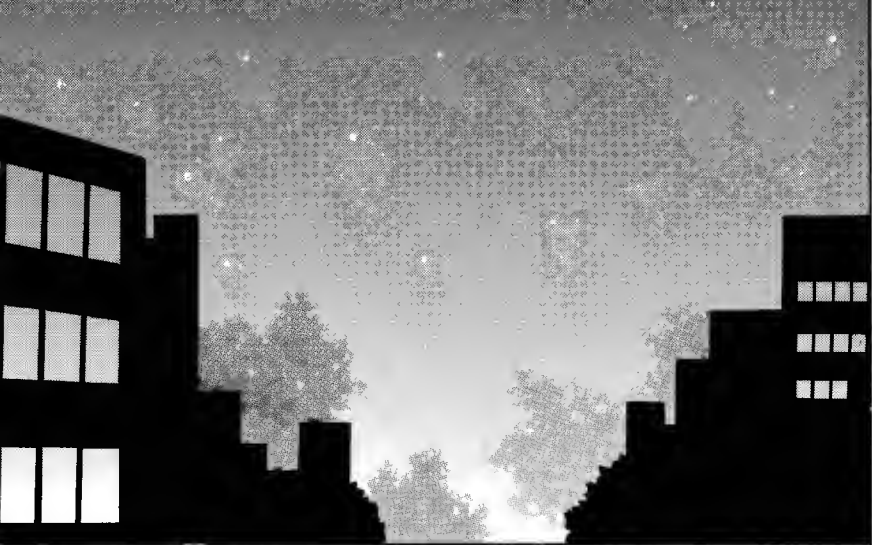


COOL, SO YOU COME IN AT THE REFRAIN, OKAY?!



YOU GOT IT!
I AM SO ON IT!

HERE WE GO!



AND I
WAS SO
PUMPED
UP ABOUT
IT, TOO.

YOU
WERE?
CUZ YOU
DIDN'T
LOOK LIKE
YOU WERE
HAVING
ANY FUN.

SEARCH
ME.

...WHAT'RE
WE
DOING?
LIKE,
WHY'D
WE EVEN
GO?

adorable!

MAYBE...

WELL,
GUESS
IT WAS
PRETTY
MUCH THE
SAME
FOR ME.

...THAT'S
CUZ I
WASN'T
HAVING
ANY FUN.

...

OH!

OMIGOD,
I SWEAR,
THAT FELT
SO GOOD!

BUT
I DID
HAVE FUN
WHEN
UMIBÔZU
CAME
ON!

I KNOW,
HUH?!

ME TOO!

ME
EITHER,
MAN!
I ALMOST
DIED WHEN
I SAW IT
THERE!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE
YOU
FOUND
THAT,
ÔTANI!

OH MY
GOSH,
I ALMOST
HAD A
HEART
ATTACK!!

I KNEW
YOU
WOULD!

I *REALLY*
WANTED TO
TELL YOU, LIKE,
THAT MOMENT,
BUT I DECIDED
IT'D BE BETTER
TO SURPRISE YOU
BY HAVING IT
SUDDENLY COME
ON, SO I KEPT
QUIET ABOUT IT.

...ÔTANI
ISN'T
SO BAD-
LOOKING.
HE'S
ACTUALLY
PRETTY
CUTE.

PLUS
WE'RE
BOTH
INTO
ALL THE
SAME
THINGS...

...AND
WE CAN
TALK
ABOUT
ALL
KINDS OF
STUFF..

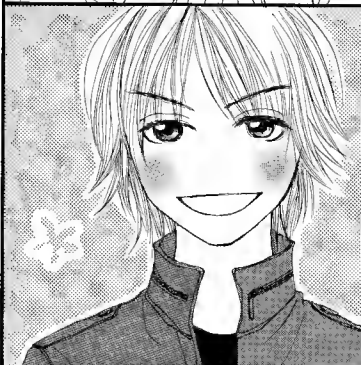
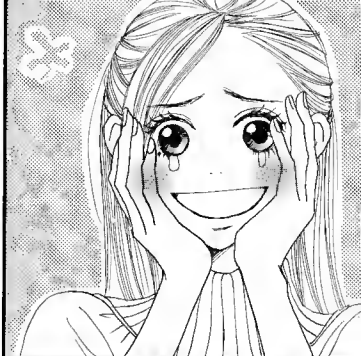
WHAT
IT SAID
ABOUT
US BEING
100
PERCENT
COMPATIBLE.

I'M
STARTING
TO THINK
MAYBE
IT WAS
RIGHT.

...

THAT
MACHINE.

HEH?

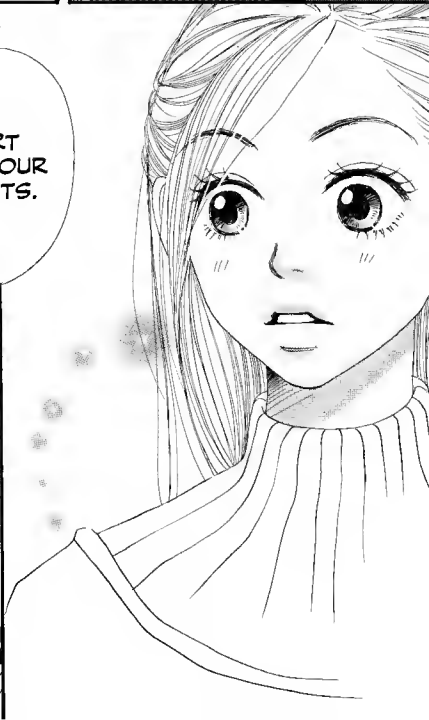


...ISN'T
THAT THE
BIGGEST
PROBLEM,
THOUGH?

APART
FROM OUR
HEIGHTS.

IT'S NOT
LIKE WE'RE
GONNA
START GOING
OUT OR
ANYTHING.

PROBLEM?
FOR
WHAT?



...SEE?

...OH,
YEAH.

...HEY,
KOIZUMI.

HM?

BEING
100
PERCENT
COMPATIBLE
DOESN'T
COUNT FOR
ANYTHING
IF YOU
AREN'T
IN LOVE.

...YOU
WANNA
GO SEE
THAT
UMIBÔZU
SHOW
TOGETHER?
YOU KNOW,
JUST CUZ.

ALL IT
MEANS IS
WE BOTH
GET REALLY
EXCITED
SINGING
UMIBÔZU
SONGS
TOGETHER.



YEAH!

**WELL,
AT LEAST
IT LOOKS
LIKE I WON'T
HAVE TO BUY
HIM THOSE
BASKETBALL
SHOES
RIGHT AWAY.**

《to be continued》

glossary

Page 9, panel 6: All Hanshin-Kyojin

All Hanshin-Kyojin are o *monzoi* dua from the late '70s-early '80s and still perform tadoy. Mainzoi ore two-person stand-up comedy acts with one persan acting as the *bake* (foal) and the other as the *tsukkomi* (who constantly castigates the *bake* for his foalishness). *Kyojin* is Joponese far "giant," ond is used os a nickname for the Tokyo-based Yomiuri Giants. The Kansai-based Hanshin Tigers are called "Hanshin" rather than "the Tigers." These twa boseboll teams ore in constant rivalry—at least in Kansai people's minds—even thaugh the Tigers tend to be at the bottom of the league standings and the Giants at the tap. The manzai duo All Hanshin-Kyojin consists af o shrimp (Honshin) and a giant (Kyajin).

Page 58, panel 5: Nori-tsukkomi

A type af comedy delivery when yau pretend ta ga along with the set-up, and then turn around and call the ather person an it, like Ôtani daes in this scene.

Page 78, panel 1: Yukata

Summer kimona, usually made of brightly colored cotton. The yukata originated as o bathrobe in the Heian period, and the word comes from *yu* (bath) and *katobiro* (underclathes). Today, yukata are aften worn during summer festivals and fireworks displays ar at traditianal Joponese inns.

Page 148, panel 6: Umibôzu

The nome af Risa and Ôtani's favorite group means "sea goblin."

Page 162, panel 5: Karaoke night

This is called *gôkan* in Joponese and is a party far meeting people, like o big group date with na commitment. Usually, *gôkan* are made up af 10-12 people, like the one here.

Page 165, panel 6: The Pet Shop Boys

The original Joponese references the folk tale "Momatoro," or Peach Boy, who is accomponied on his odventure by o pheasant, a monkey, ond a dog.



Ever since my debut I've been using the same mechanical pencil that a friend gave me when I landed my first job. But the other day it suddenly disappeared. I went to the store hoping to find the same model, but they didn't have it, so I bought a whole bunch of different ones and am now auditioning them. But...it's gotta be **that** one! Woooh!!

Aya Nakahara won the 2003 Shogakukan manga award for her breakthrough hit *Love★Com*, which was made into a major motion picture and a PS2 game in 2006. She debuted with *Haru to Kuuki Nichiyo-bi* in 1995, and her other works include *HANADA* and *Himitsu Kichi*.

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